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# JETTA

OR

HEIDELBERG UNDER THE ROMANS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



# JETTA

OR

HEIDELBERG UNDER THE ROMANS.

A HISTORICAL NOVEL

BY

GEORGE TAYLOR.

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*[HAUSBACH, ADOLF]*

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY SUTTON F. CORKRAN  
(TRANSLATOR OF «KLYTIA»).

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# JETTA.

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## CHAPTER I.

OVER fifteen hundred years have elapsed since the events which we are about to narrate, took place. The Neckar and the Rhine were then called Nicer and Rhenus. A great injustice had at that time been done to the Nicer; the Emperor Valentinianus had accused the Alemannian river of undermining with its rapid torrent the fundamentals of the Roman forts of Alta Ripa.<sup>1</sup> He had therefore turned the river out of its own old bed, and excavated a new one. Not where it was wont, but where the autocratic ruler willed it, must the Nicer flow. How the bearded Rhenus with his reed-bedecked head must have wondered, when his companion suddenly failed to appear in his custo-

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<sup>1</sup> Altrip (near Mannheim).

mary direction, but joined his dark green waters to the paler green of the mightier stream in quite another place. In the winter and spring, at the time of the high tides, the small river-god reared indeed mightily his lofty crest. But in summer the stream, which flowed through the most idyllic valleys of Germany exhibited no such propensities. Peacefully glinting from thousand shimmering eyes it sped its course between high blocks of granite and yellow sand-banks, reflecting in calmer spots, like some placid lake, the serene imagery of hills and woods. To the left, where it issued from the valley, the well-wooded Mons Valentiniani with its Roman watch-tower stood boldly prominent, to the right Mons Piri, named thus from the wild pear-trees which crowned in great quantities its bald peak. Between these two giant-mountains, which guarded like twin Pylones the entrance to the sacred wood of Wodan, the lovely river, comfortably widening its bed, issued forth into the verdant Rhine plain. Some hundred yards below the victorious Imperator had restored the old Roman swinging-bridge, and erected a fortified camp, or outpost fort as we should call it, to guard the cross-roads near the bridge, and to prevent the

valley from becoming a sallying point for the Alemanni

On the straight high-road, which intersected the green plains to the west of Mons Piri, was a busy concourse of Roman knights, and of the two-wheeled oxen carts of the coloni who looked after the communications between the newly fortified Lupodunum<sup>1</sup> and the Roman headquarters. The May sun poured down its torrid rays upon the gravel-cement of the causeway, which wended between the ditches cut out to carry off the rain, shaded by neither tree nor wall, an occasional mile-stone, marking the distance from Lupodunum, or a small military post alone casting a dark line across the dazzling whiteness of the road. This heat may have been comfortable to warriors tanned by the Syrian or African sun, after that the storms of a German winter had whistled through the plumes of their helmets. Less thanks, however, did the May sun deserve from two German Christian pilgrims who strode bare-headed behind two heavily-laden mules and a half-naked guide. The cross embroidered on the corner of the cloak of the elder, a haggard figure clothed in a white under-

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<sup>1</sup> Ladenburg.

garment and mantle, marked him out to be a Bishop. The younger, a fair shock-headed youth, clad in a coarse dark stuff, appeared to be one of those monks, who even in the West sprang up everywhere, since the time, when the holy Athanasius had brought together with him certain attendants of this kind, to share his exile in Gaul. Finally the pace of the mules became too rapid for the Bishop, and he sat down exhausted on one of those stones which in former days a curator of roads had erected to the Gods of the double-, treble-, and cross-ways. "Well, brother Vulfilaich," he said, "I hope that thou art no longer angry at the deception practised on thee by the deacon. After believing that thou didst bring church vessels and sacred vestments, which our poor Basilica at Lupodunum, ten times plundered by the Alemanni, requires, therefore he induced thee to alight in our town. How could he possibly imagine that a monk concealed weapons and mundane implements in his bundles?"

"I am not angered, reverend Father Anakletus, but I grieve, that a servant of the holy church should speak an untruth and deceive me as do the children of the world. Had I not



asked him, I should now be in my ship in the camp."

"I will lay upon him a church penance for his lies, but thou, how comes it that thou bringest this armour of the world to a heathen?"

"The heathen is my brother, after the flesh."

"The powerful Alemann Rothari is thy brother?" asked the Bishop in a doubting tone, and the thought so excited him, that he sprang up and hastened after the mules, which in the mean time had obtained a considerable start.

"However poor and ragged I may appear to thee this day," began the young Alemann, I am nevertheless son of a king, who some years ago terrified the Romans by burning and pillaging the towns of Gaul. My father, king Vadomar, was taken prisoner by Cæsar Julian and afterwards fought the battles of Rome in the far East. We, his sons, four in number, Vithikab, Fraomar, Rothari, and I carried on the war, and I think with some success. Often did you tremble on hearing the war-cry of the fair Vithikab. Then, however, quarrels, jealousies, and brothers' dissensions arose, which separated us, luckily for you." The young monk remained silent, and appeared buried in

painful remembrances, the Bishop nevertheless asked in an unctuous manner, "Was it the old dispute about *meum* and *tuum* which disunited you?" Vulflaich nodded his fair wild head pensively, and then continued. "From distant Syria came the news of our father's death. The eldest member of the clan should according to right and custom divide the property among the sons. But he was a faithless man. He favoured the king, and injured Rothari, as he hated my brother, for pursuing him on account of a servant he had slain. He therefore divided unjustly, and the wicked Satan blinded me, and I also took what was not mine. Rothari, the beauteous, the true, gave me a long sad look, which I shall not forget in my hour of death, then swung himself on to his horse, and rode over to the Romans. Since that time fortune deserted our branch. Vithikab, the king, was murdered by a servant bribed by Augustus. We lost battle after battle, and were even compelled to hide our unjustly acquired treasures in the stronghold on the highest peak of the Taunus range. Sad and anxious my brother Fraomar and I wandered about, and we felt how our authority over the people was lessening. When the election for king came, the

nobles chose Macrian. Fraomar was embittered thereby and entered into secret correspondence with the Romans. He went about as if branded, and but few would have anything to do with him. The worst, however, happened to me. Thou knowest, how in the last year of the reign of king Vithikab our young men crossed over the frozen Rhenus and plundered Mogontiacum.”<sup>1)</sup>

The Bishop made a gesture of horror with his hand.

“We approached thither over fields of snow, and crept quietly like wolves across the frozen river. We had almost reached the other shore, and all hurried eagerly towards the land, when I broke in and could not work myself out. As often as I swung myself to the top, so often did the ice break anew. Plainly now did I hear in mine ear the mocking laugh of the Nix, who sat under the icy surface, and said each time as it broke: ‘thus didst thou break the faith towards thy brother.’ Finally I became stiff, and only hung on loosely by my cramped arms. Some stragglers came along. They pulled me out and dragged me to the shore. There, however, they left me lying in a field, for

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<sup>1</sup> Mainz.

they were afraid of arriving too late to aid in the plunder."

"Great sins were spared thee," said the Bishop pathetically. "Thou knowest, how thy party, heedless of the Feast of the Epiphany, surrounded the Basilicæ, and carried away into captivity all the saints who had hastened thither from all parts of the country, how ruthlessly they pillaged the churches of the Lord, and used the sacred chalices for their sinful carouses. Praise the Lord, O my Brother, who has snatched thee like a brand out of the fire."

"I indeed lay in the fire, reverend Father. When I came to my senses I found myself in a feverish glow lying in one of the carts belonging to our people. I was ill the whole winter. Two of my toes had been frozen off. When the sun became stronger I expected to regain my health. But the Lord had decreed heavier chastisements as a punishment for my willing to aid in plundering his church. He had delivered me up to one of Satan's angels, who smote me with his fists. From time to time he comes at me. My limbs are then as if racked. I rave and rage, and only after a long sleep do I become myself once more. Under

Macrian's guidance my people were again victorious, and Fraomar whom the Romans wished to place on the throne was driven away. I was no longer of any use to them in battle, and they did not want me, as my brothers sided with the Romans. I took to the woods, lived on the chase, and guided strangers for pay, as do many other nobles in our boundary country.

"Thus riding out one day, I met the deacon Benedictus sitting by the road, who carried credentials from king Gundomad to Macrian, asking his permission to be allowed to visit the Christians, living in the valleys of the Taunus range. He had hurt his foot and asked me to take him on my horse as far as *Aquæ Matticæ*.<sup>1</sup> I asked him eagerly how much he would pay me for doing so. He answered that he would leave the earthly price for me to decide, moreover he would pray for my soul. I laughed, helped him to mount and led him to the town. When we parted I demanded an exorbitant price. The reverend old man looked at me with a kindly gaze, gave me what I asked, and two large handfuls besides, asking me if I wished for more? I stared at him,

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<sup>1</sup> Wiesbaden.

thinking he was mad. But he said: 'Thou art yet young, may the Lord enlighten thee, that thou mayest learn, how even the most beauteous earth is nothing but dirt.' As I pocketed the gold, I felt as if I had committed some secret robbery. All joy left me. I went on till I reached the gate. Then it occurred to me how avariciously I had dealt at one time towards my dearest brother, how I had lost him, and how since then I had had neither luck nor star, and I was obliged to weep and weep, and do what I could, the tears would not cease flowing. I now turned my horse round, galloped back to the holy man, and found him sitting outside the house where I had left him. I sprang from my horse, went up to him, and as I scarcely dared to address him, I handed him back the gold in my bag. 'I knew that thou wouldst return,' he said gently. 'Thine eyes are clear and bright as the gold-brown mountain brooks of Mons Abnoba,<sup>1</sup> the Evil one could only be thy master for a moment.' 'Holy man,' I rejoined, 'who couldst soften the heart within my bosom, make me to find my brother again whom I have lost.' At his request I related my history

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<sup>1</sup> Black Forest.

to him. 'First will I reconcile thee to thy father,' said he, 'and next to thy brother.' Thus I remained with him. He taught me to know God, his Son, and the blessed Saints. After a long examination he admitted me to baptism."

The Bishop nodded his head contently, then asked: "And hast thou never pined when in this miserable dress after the pomps and joys of the regal halls?"

"Never after the joys, reverend father. Their recollections are to me as the smell of the drained beaker the day succeeding the carouse. But the wicked enemy endeavours at times to tempt me with recollections of battles and heroic deeds. My hand still clutches at every weapon which I see, and I forget with difficulty that I was once a warrior."

"Didst thou live so quietly and indolently with Benedictus?"

"For weeks I accompanied the holy man, and served him as a support on his wanderings between Mœnus<sup>1</sup> and Nicer. I learnt how one should preach to women and children, and terrify warriors with the weapons of the Lord, but inwardly I had

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<sup>1</sup> Main.

no rest, till I had once again reconciled myself to my brother, and had expiated my great injustice. For this cause Benedictus dismissed me. I climbed to the *ring* on the top of Mons Taunus, and took therefrom all the treasures belonging to Rothari which had been allotted to me and added mine own thereto, and bringing it down to the Rhenus, there I loaded it on a boat and travelled up the stream. At Mogontiacum I met the Deacon, who prayed me to take him as far as Lupodunum. The rest thou knowest. I would not have unshipped my cargo at Lupodunum, had he not assured me that the house of the Comes Arator, where lives Rothari, was easier to reach from your town than from the camp."

"Well, my mules have, as I think, made up for Afer's pious lies, and I myself will accompany thee as far as Arator's villa. Art thou, however, willing to take shelter under the roof of an unbeliever?"

"How could I convert them, if I did not live among them. Did not the Apostles the same?"

"Yes, yes, my Son, but this house is something more than a hut of the Galatians, it is a temple of Baal, the cave of Endor, the palace of Simon



Magus and Elymas, the gardenhouse of the idolatrous Jesabel at Thyatira."

"Thou speakest in riddles, my Father."

"Know then," said the Bishop in a lower tone, as he kept a few steps behind the mule-driver, "that Arator's daughter practises magic. Far and wide there is no woman so deeply versed in the arts of sorcery as she. She carries on her devilish exercises every time the moon is at its full, and Christian slaves have seen her at midnight wandering with closed eyes by the pale moonlight, walking along the highest walls and battlements without the slightest dizziness, and returning to her room by the most inconceivable ways."

The young monk turned pale and gazed at the Bishop with widely opened eyes: "And hast thou never exorcised her, my father, never sprinkled her with holy water, never stirred her conscience?"

"I should willingly have driven the dæmons out of her, but the hypocrites would not suffer me. Her father is an unbeliever and a man in authority. For this cause must we keep silent in spite of all abominations, especially as the Empress Justina is the intimate friend of the

maiden, and report has it, that she it was who instructed her in necromancy."

"But the Empress has been baptised. Why dost thou not excommunicate her?"

"Excommunicate the Empress? Art thou mad? What does the young fool mean? She is the only prop of the cause of Areios."

"Of Areios!" shrieked the young monk utterly horrified. "Art thou also an Arian?" and he crossed himself. "This accounts for finding myself when among you in such a net of lies and deceit. I am no longer astonished at what I have undergone at your hands."

"Guard thy tongue, thou devil-possessed boy, else I cast the whole of thy heathen load in the road and return to Lupodunum with my mules. How wouldst thou, a mere youth, pass judgment on the highest secrets of the faith?"

"My spiritual father Benedictus," said the young Vulflaich quietly, "has forbidden me to hold intercourse with Arians, to walk with them on the way, to speak with them on the road, to eat at the same table with them, to pray with them to the same God, to dwell with them under the same roof." The eyes of the old Bishop flamed.

For a moment he felt inclined to carry out his proposal and order the mule-driver to unload. But the beasts were too far ahead to be immediately caught up, and the right reverend also remembered that it was the brother of the powerful Rothari, who thus addressed him.

"Thou didst escape the rod too soon, young Alemann," he said coldly. "Were I not accustomed to requite evil with good, I should leave thee sitting here with thy bundles, of which the soldiers would undoubtedly lighten thee. But I lend thee my animals till thou reachest the villa of Arator. I will no longer trouble thy tender conscience with my presence."

He turned away without any greeting, and the young monk suffered him to depart without a salutation. "If any man comes to you," he said to himself, "and brings this doctrine, take him not into thy house, neither do thou greet him. For whosoever greets him, becomes a partaker of his evil works." With redoubled haste he sped onwards along the hot and dusty road, till the mule-driver pointed to a house on the green slopes of Mons Piri observing that this was Arator's villa. The house that the young Vulflaich sought,

situated at the foot of the mountain, was separated from the dusty highroad by a large meadow. The fore shoulder of the double-peaked hill with its snow-white blossoms stood out picturesquely as compared with the dark-green fir-woods above. On the sunniest part of the slope, the Comes Arator had erected for himself and his daughter Jetta a comfortable dwelling-house. Behind blossoming trees and green vines arose the new building, whose white walls gleamed through the bushes with striking simplicity. The noise of the road with its military provision carts, the sound of horses' hoofs, the creaking of the two-wheeled carts drawn by oxen, only reached in a very subdued form this retreat surrounded by well cared for beds of flowers and dark foliage. But none of the young warriors who rode along the road, forgot to look up in the direction of the garden to see whether a tall female form were not walking among the blossoming bushes, for but to have caught a glimpse of her white drapery was considered a privilege. Turning away from the road, a neat path strewn with gravel from the river led through verdant lawns up to the house. The young monk turned up this path with feelings very

different to those of the young warriors. Looking up to the highest pinnacle of the roof, he thought what an awful sight it must be to see the crazy sorceress wandering in the moonlight on its edge, and he wondered to himself that no believing brother had compelled through his prayers the devils to come out of her, so that she would crash down to the ground, as once Simon Magus came to an untimely end through Peter's prayers when attempting an equally diabolical ascension into heaven. The driver now halted, and Vulfilaich had to step to the threshold in order to knock. Latin runes which he deciphered with difficulty were cut into the stone-floor. He made the sign of the cross. But the words sounded well: "Be thou welcome, thou who comest with an honest heart!" "Even Satan assumes the shape of an angel of light," thought the young monk as he let the metal knocker fall against the door. A young soldier opened. Vulfilaich saw before him a good-natured German face with fair hair and blue eyes. "Thou hast come to the wrong place," said the servant, returning the monk's Christian greeting, "those who dwell here are pagans."

"I do not seek their hospitality," said the monk. "I have to give up these loads to the Alemann Rothari, who is, I understand, at present a guest here."

"My Lord awaits the noble Rothari, thou canst carry thy bundles to his room, though we know not whether he will arrive to-day. Shall I help thee? I also am a Christian and an Alemann. Though here they call me Lupicinus."

"They could not translate my name Vulfilaich in any other way," said the monk smiling, "therefore, O my companion, take up this bundle, but with heed, so likewise this one." The young men set their clashing load carefully down on the ground. The mules, freed of their packs, joyfully shook themselves, and together with their driver trotted quickly back to the road, whilst Vulfilaich and Lupicinus carried Rothari's treasures up to his apartment. The young monk, cheerfully aided by his companion, unpacked his bundles in a large room which was lighted from the Atrium. "Let us set out the things at once," said the monk, "so that Rothari may rejoice the moment he enters the house." Straightway from out of the sacks were seen German and Roman weapons,

silver jugs and dishes, valuable brooches of all sorts. The worthy Lupicinus opened his eyes wide on seeing so much wealth, and following the inclination of youth, the two Alemanni were soon engaged in a lively conversation. Even the young monk became suddenly quite another man when looking on this former plunder. His eyes glistened and a deep red coloured his pale cheek. Joyfully did he relate to the companion so ready to aid him, how each particular bit came into the possession of his family. "I myself brought back this beaker from Lugdunum<sup>1</sup> when we some eleven years ago ransacked Gaul. That was a glorious time," cried the young Alemann at the sight of his best bit of plunder, quite heedless of his monkish garb. "It was my first campaign, and what a war! The Romans were disunited; Julian, one of their commanders, was surrounded, which pleased the other, Barbatio, exceedingly, and he always let us know how we could best attack Julian. When we had placed one booty in safety, Julian wished to pursue us across the Rhenus, but Barbatio burnt his ships, so that he could not cross over. He even cast his provisions

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<sup>1</sup> Lyons.

into the Rhenus, before withdrawing, so that Julian's soldiers might starve. Against such enemies war is a pleasure. They are however unbelievers, blasphemers, arrogant boasters, disobedient to their parents, devoid of reason, faithless," he then added, remembering his office. "This shield," he continued, "Galerius, the persecutor of the church, presented to my ancestor Bappo, the commander of his life-guard. Here is the sword of a brave man, my great-uncle, against whose naked body the Emperor Constantine set on the wild beasts in the amphitheatre at Treveri<sup>1</sup>. May it not be put down to his account on the last day. Rothari obtained as his share of the booty these brazen jars, crystal beakers, and this whole heap of precious articles, as he stormed Autosidurum<sup>2</sup>. It was a good year for our people. We burnt at that time to the ground Mogontiacum, Borbetomagus, Noviomagus, Argentoratum, Breucomagus, Tabernæ and Saletio,<sup>3</sup> blind heathens that we were."

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<sup>1</sup> Treves.

<sup>2</sup> Autun.

<sup>3</sup> Mainz, Worms, Speier, Strasburg, Brumath, Zabern and Selz in Alsace.



"But did you rob this silver dove from some church?" asked Lupicinus, shaking his head.

"Peace, peace," rejoined the monk in a low voice. "It does not belong to me, otherwise I had sent it back long ago. It is of the time of Rando's expedition against Mogontiacum. This took place during the feast of the Epiphany. The Rhene was entirely frozen over, Rando crossed it, whilst the whole congregation including the country people was gathered within the Basilica. Benedictus, my teacher, has related to me, how at the moment the Bishop was preaching about the three kings, who worshipped the king of Heaven in the name of all the nations of the earth, and brought to him tribute of all the gifts which are his due. Suddenly the war-cry of the Alemanni echoed through the streets. The churches were surrounded and all good Christians were led away captives, men, women, and children. I think the Lord suffered it, so that the seed of the gospel might be spread among our people. Our warriors pillaged the houses from top to bottom. The booty was incalculable. At that time, however, the sword had been struck out of my hand, so that I did not desecrate the churches of the Lord." He sighed,

and the glittering gold seemed no longer to have any pleasures for him. Lupicinus, however, looked over all the glistening articles and asked thoughtfully, "Thus Rothari, who is to live here, joined in all these plundering expeditions."

"He was ever in front of all others, and terrified even in the heart of Gaul the hosts of the Augustus."

"I am therefore the more surprised that your Lord entered our ranks and now terrifies you," replied Lupicinus.

"I have only *one* Lord, and have surmounted all fear of men," said the young monk, over whom suddenly quite another disposition seemed to come. Lupicinus looked at him in amazement, as he could not clearly explain to his own satisfaction, why all at once an expression of deep depression should overshadow the face of the young monk. But he had no time for further inquiries, as a noise was heard in the Atrium. A small man with a red beard and the sharp face of a bird of prey had entered therein, and was immediately hailed by two young soldiers, who questioned him as to the expected visit of the commander of the

German troops, which seemed in no way to please them.

"Silence!" whispered Lupicinus to the monk. "The Notarius has again listened, I saw him creep past some time ago."

"Who are these men?"

"A bad lot; the fat one who opens his mouth like a boiled fish is Statius, a cousin of my Lord. The other who with his thin legs resembles a mandrake is called Nasica and is likewise related to Arator, the third with the red beard" . . . .

Lupicinus proceeded no further, for the oldest of the three, whom he was about to describe now turned round and said in a harsh voice: "What are you doing here chattering about the heroic deeds of the Alemanni?"

"He has overheard us," thought Vulfilaich angrily, looking with a lowering glance at the man's sarcastic repellant features. A small well dressed Roman of about fifty, whose thin arms were badly set off by the toga stood before him. There was nothing handsome in the man, except a well cared for red beard which hung from under his large Roman nose down to his breast. An inimical look of great self-consciousness was stamped on his

face, and the black eyes stood out with an insolent stare from under the reddish eye-lashes.

"The Notarius<sup>1</sup> Syagrius," whispered Lupicinus, whilst the former examined Vulfilaich with an expression of mistrust. "This man has brought the properties of the noble Rothari," said Lupicinus apologetically, "and we are busy putting things in their proper places."

"Then should you scatter them through the various palaces of the noble Augustus in Gaul, from whence they have been stolen," answered the Notarius sharply with a mocking smile, whilst his younger companions cast inquisitive glances at the treasures thus exhibited. "Take heed of him," said Lupicinus as they left. "He has sharp teeth. Yet thou remainest here. I will share my *cella* with thee."

"I have a message for Bishop Ithacius."

"For Ithacius the hated of God, the murderer, the Antichrist? what hast thou to do with that wolf?"

"So thou also art one of the flock of Arius," replied the young monk sadly. Lupicinus was silent but frowned. "I am forbidden to hold communi-

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<sup>1</sup> State secretary.

cation with you," continued Vulfilaich hesitatingly. "Tell Rothari that he who brought these things will return to-morrow. It would have been better never to have joined the church, than now to tread contemptuously so great a salvation under foot. Wouldest thou be freed of thine errors, so will I speak with thee again, thy hospitality however I cannot accept." So saying he strode away, Lupicinus whilst looked after him in astonishment.

"Then I have helped the holy man to unload his mules, donkey that I myself am, and as a reward he insults my belief. But wait, to-morrow I shall pay off on Salvius' back all that thou hast done me to-day in the name of your God." And making an unmistakeable motion with his fist, he returned to his work.

## CHAPTER II.

KLING! KLING! KLING! echoed clearly through the green beech wood, which stretched over the broad top of the Mons Piri, and the joyous sound of the pick was heard in the May woods at that day, when ruled the powerful Augustus Valentinianus and his youthful heir Gratianus, and when Am-

brosius of Milan and Martin of Tours were the greatest church lights of the West, resounding as clear and pleasing to the heart, as when at the present time industrious workmen hew out the blocks from the deep dug sandstone quarries and speak about the Emperor of Germany. Then, however, the cheery tone proceeded from some hundred quarrymen, lightly clad, some indeed half-naked, who, spread about the clearings of the woods, were busily engaged in couples shaping the erratic blocks brought to the light of day into the massive squares with which the Emperor Valentinianus purposed to build a fort upon the heights. The hammering, knocking, jingling sounded so lustily through the white hawthorn bushes that the birds listened with astonishment, and determined to carry on their own concerts deeper in the woods, as owing to the rapping and thumping it was utterly impossible to hear one's own voice. Two superior officers guided by the clanging sound ascended the road, which had been cut out with so much strategical knowledge, that any attacking party would have presented to the defenders of the mountain, not the side protected by the shield, but the exposed breast. Wiping at times their

brows moistened by the exertion of the ascent, manfully did they climb upwards between the white blossoming blackberry bushes and the yellow genista. The elder was a tall stately man with iron gray hair and a proud Roman head. Over his richly gilt leather harness gleamed the red military cloak fastened on the right shoulder by a golden brooch shaped in the head of a lion. A costly buckle glistened on the girth of the short Roman sword. According to the taste of the day this exhibited more ornament and colour than old Rome would have permitted to an officer doing duty on the boundaries of the empire. But the bearing of the old man was that of simplicity and sovereignty. The aristocratic Roman countenance with its clear defined line between the brows showed the general capable of commanding his legions with a glance of the eye, whilst the tightly closed lips disclosed the statesman who had learnt how to control himself. A suppressed fire glowed in the eyes as contradiction to the assumed coldness of expression. The German giant who strode at his side looked therefore all the more simply clad. The furmantle over which the wolf helmet thrown back resembled a hood, the tight leather

doublet and the heavy military shoes must have been in such a May sun more warm than agreeable. The wearer, a huge young man with fair golden hair and light blue eyes, did not appear to feel this, and when he halted and rested on his long lance, on which mementoes of numerous battles were engraved, this happened rather out of regard for the older companion, to whom speech when climbing seemed often a matter of difficulty. The old officer would then look gratefully at his young friend, for the German had kindly eyes, pleasant to behold. The Gods of the Alemannian woods had inscribed on his countenance only welcome runes, childish mirth, which spake of unimpaired youth, and a maiden blush caused by the rapidly rising blood which coloured his virginlike cheek, when he heard anything offensive, so that anger only beautified and did not distort him, as it does many others.

"Pardon me, noble Rothari," began the older man, "if I scold my guest, but it was imprudent to so openly exhibit in my dwelling all the booty of thy war times. The Notarius Syagrius saw them and filled my young nephews with rage and jealousy against their new companion in arms,



who paraded the booty which he at one time had taken from us."

"The Gods alone know how it was that such an exhibition took place," answered Rothari blushing. "A monk is said to have brought the things. I know of no other monks, than those whom last week I ordered to be flogged at Argentoratum,<sup>1</sup> for causing a mutiny in the camp. Moreover only part of this booty is my property, the rest belongs to my brother. I stood as if bewitched at its aspect, and Lupicinus who could have unravelled the mystery, as he received the things, was on duty, so that I am quite at a loss how to explain the circumstance. Nevertheless I think that if I present some part of it to each of my comrades, they will consider matters in a different light."

"I do not heed them," rejoined the Comes Arator. "But Syagrius writes reports to Treviri,<sup>2</sup> and thou knowest Valentinian's suspicious nature. Thou art at the present time high in the grace of the Augustus, but have we not seen those that

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<sup>1</sup> Strasburg.

<sup>2</sup> Colonia Augusta Treverorum, later Treviri, Treves.

stood there highest disgraced on less important accusations?"

"I have already fallen once," said Rothari laughing. "Nevertheless he drew me to land provisionally."

"How so, what caused the quarrel? Most certainly was it again Justina the Christian?"

"No, this time it was his other friend, the brown Mica."

"Who is Mica?"

"Thou knowest not Mica? The Emperor's shaggy consort, in whose passionate embrace more than thirty brave men have breathed away their lives."

"Thou speakest in riddles."

"Mica, the well-cared-for, who slept immediately under the windows of the Emperor's bed-chamber."

"A more strictly moral man than Valentinian never existed."

"O, his morals are still strict enough, as Mica is a female bear."

"Then it is true, that he thrusts criminals into the bear-pit?"

"Myself he thrust in with his own hand,

luckily together with my sword, with which I took the liberty of piercing his friend."

"Impossible."

"I had insulted him, so at least he asserted, and Bishop Ithacius of Ossumba, who is still at court, goaded him on, because I rejected his baptism. It came to pass one day that Valentinian's war-charger shied, as he was about to spring into the saddle. He insisted that the groom had held it badly and roared out to me: 'Smite the ruffian's hand off.' I took the man aside, and told him to remain hidden till the Emperor's rage had blown over. Valentinian heard through his parasites that I had not executed his orders. The next morning as I stood near the pit feeding Mica, Valentinian suddenly came up to me and said: 'Why didst thou not cut off the knave's hand?' 'Because hands do not grow again!' I replied. The veins in his forehead swelled with rage, his squinting eyes rolled, and before I was aware, the giant had hurled me with a cunning blow over the wall into the bear-pit, in which I fell at Mica's feet, who rose up growling. I picked myself up quickly and stuck my sword up to the hilt in the bear's ribs. 'Good stroke!' I heard Valentinian

call out above me. He stretched down his hand to aid me out. 'Not yet,' I answered, 'till I have slain all the other beasts which disgrace thy name.' 'I will turn them loose in the woods,' he answered good-naturedly. 'Now come up, before that people see how my dæmon once more got the better of me.' And with the greatest difficulty and danger to himself he pulled me out, covered my face with kisses, and begged me to forgive him."

"Yea, verily, that is like him, thus is he, and his saints and bishops have not been able to curb his savage nature. A pretty Christian!"

"He is as much a Christian as thou or I. He once related to us during a banquet, when the wine had got to his head, how when but a tribune of the guard he had come into the odour of sanctity. It was in Antioch, and owing to the great heat he had become thoroughly weary of running from one temple to another with the god-seeking Julian. His evil star led him in the way of a priest of Apollo who sprinkled the holy water in his face and eyes. Even at that time rough and passionate as now he gave the priest a box on the ear. Naturally there was a great fuss made about the desecration of the temple, and Julian as a punish-

ment for such an act of impropriety sent him to a fort in Egypt. Since then the Bishops honoured him as a martyr, and partly to them does he owe his rise. If he was rough then, he is now cruel. But he causes Christian presbyters to be flogged equally with heathen courtiers."

"But after such an adventure how did you come to be sent to Rome?"

"I believed therein to recognise Justinian's influence, who takes a pleasure in disentangling, with the delicate hand of a woman, the knots fastened by the violent passion of man. The following day I received an invitation to the table. I sat between the Emperor and Empress as if I had been the holy Martin, whom he most fears in Gaul, and whom she most hates. As if in joke Justina informed me that I must be the bearer of a message from the Emperor to the Senate. Especially, however, must I when in Rome be seen twice daily on each Forum. The appearance of a seven-foot German would be in itself sufficient to bring the city of the seven hills to a sense of obedience."

"Credit not too much the sweet words and beauteous eyes. She is a Sicilian, neighbour of the Sirens."

"Well, I am no Cyclops and keep both eyes open. It appeared to me rather, that my presence after the horrible occurrence annoyed him. Above all he would not entrust a legion to my command in a war against my people, as he does not place confidence in an Alemann."

"Nevertheless it was pleasing to thee not to be obliged to fight against thy relations?"

"Yes and no. I envy you, however, the glorious victory which you have just won without me."

"It was hard work," said the Comes. "So soon as we heard of Vithikab's death" —

"You mean his murder by an assassin," interrupted Rothari bitterly, and the clear red blush of rage flamed up on his beauteous young face.

"The opportunity presented itself," said the Comes, "and I cannot blame Valentinian for seizing it."

The German looked aside. "He was thy brother, but thine enemy," said Arator. "But whether deserving of praise or blame, Augustus availed himself of the confusion which arose in the camp of the barbarians, with an energy which we must all admire. They had as yet elected no king, and already the smoke of their villages and huts

made known the progress of the God of war. Carefully did we cross the Rhenus marching over their hills and dales till we finally came in sight of the enemy at Solicinium. Our advance guard reported that the Alemanni held fortified the mountain, which stretches as a bolt straight in front of the valley of the Nicer. We did not feel inclined to storm such heights and erected a permanent camp. Each side awaited the attack of the other. Above were the shouting Barbarians, below were our men, who committed great depredation, and discipline became relaxed. Thus we lay for a long time facing one another, whilst the Alemanni mocked us, and our troops began to mutiny out of sheer impatience. To avoid the worst, Valentinian determined to do battle. Comes Sebastianus was directed to attack the enemy from the hills, which lay to the north of the position of the barbarians. The Legion of the Joviani was ordered to guard the camp as well as the young Augustus Gratianus, the Emperor himself accompanied the main body to storm the fortified heights from the front so soon as Sebastianus had attacked the enemy in the rear.

“The approach pointed out by the advance

guard seemed to the Emperor unfavourable. He therefore rode out together with his chamberlain and a small staff to reconnoitre in person. The low country about the mountain was still flooded by the spring rains; the reeds were of man's height; as Cæsar had now reached quite close to the mountain, the Alemanni suddenly broke forth on all sides from their ambuscade. A gigantic warrior, whose head was encircled with fiery red ribbons, swinging his battle-axe seized hold of the bridle of the chamberlain's horse. He must have thought him to be the best prey, as he wore the Emperor's golden helmet glittering with precious stones and jewels. Resistance was not to be thought of. Valentinian turned his horse and galloped through reed and swamp back to us as hard as he could. The flight of the Augustus began the battle, and his gold helmet known to every soldier as having been our rallying point in twenty combats was lost. None ever saw the chamberlain or helmet more. Hesitation, counsel and halting began anew. But no choice was now left to Valentinian. The army had seen his flight, he must fight and win, else would the soldiers hail Sebastianus as Imperator. He therefore himself seized the labarum with its



purple streamer, under whose token we fight. The tuba sounded and was answered from the north, south, and west, and this echo which told the soldiers how strong we were, increased the courage of our men, whilst it diminished that of the barbarians, who heard now here, now there, in the plain and in the valley the call of the trumpet. Salvius, a scutarian and one of the gentiles, and Lupicinus, who is now of my household, had offered themselves to begin the attack. Joyfully swinging their lances the bold youths pressed far forwards, as singing and cheering they stormed the first pass. The struggle raged now round each block of rock. Our men forced a passage through thicket and thorn, whilst the barbarians above thrust, cut and hurled. But there were ten Romans to each Alemann, from all sides Roman helmets sprang from out the bushes. The barbarians were outflanked right and left. Quicker and quicker did our men press forwards, weaker and weaker became the resistance. When we reached the brow of the hill, another fearful struggle took place. The battle was undecided, the dead sank right and left. Finally Comes Sebastianus who had by making a long *détour* surmounted

the heights, attacked the enemy from the woods in the rear, and now the barbarians took to flight howling. The entire clan with women and children rushed down the hill, whilst we hailed down from above, into their broad backs and naked legs, all the missiles which yet remained, so that the mountain down to the very river was strown with bleeding corpses. The remainder of the wild band disappeared in the woods, as if they had never existed."

"This then was the victory celebrated by Ausonius in his Mosella," said Rothari.

"In banded triumph it beheld father and son  
As they drove the enemy over Nicer and Lupodunum  
And the sources of the Ister, which Rome's annals know not.  
Lately came with a laurel the news of this ended war."

"But wouldst thou believe, that Valentinian inwardly is but little pleased with his victory and thinks only of this day with an infecting gloom, so that none dare speak of it in his presence?"

"Curious! "

"The empress herself has confided this to my daughter. He mentally ever sees himself flying before the Alemannian chieftain, and above all it is the loss of his helmet which enrages him. Justina

never ceases reminding him of it. Thou knowest how superstitious she is. This symbol of the august sovereignty appears to her in all her dreams. At one time she sees some Alemannian warrior wearing the helmet and scoffing at Valentinian therein before the whole army. At another she sees it decorating the hall of some petty king, and when the enemy are filled with mead and barley, the one after the other set on their drunken heads the helmet of the Autocrat. My daughter tells me, that it has been explained to Justina that the omen portends the immediate advent of an emperor of German descent. I laughed when I heard it, but the helmet has become with her a fixed idea. Valentinian also will conclude no honourable peace with the Alemanni, till they have returned his helmet."

"That will be hard to obtain," said Rothari. "The warrior with the red ribbon was no other than Rando."

"Knowest thou where he deposited the booty?" asked the Comes eagerly. Rothari remained silent. The young man seemed buried in thought. After a while he said, "I would willingly have returned to Treviri to make my peace with Augustus, but at

Mons Brisiacus<sup>1</sup> I found orders to examine the fortifications along the Rhine, and to maintain friendly relations with the Alemanni. Valentinian holds it to be important to continue in peace for another year. That was not pleasing to me. I fight without compunction against the people that drove me out, but I will not deceive or keep them in suspense. Is what was told me at Vindonissa true, that the Emperor intends incorporating into the empire the entire plain between the bend of the Rhenus and here at the influx of the Nicer?"

Arator pointed to the watch-towers erected in the rear and front of the mountains. "This has already taken place, and I approve it. Since that the boundary line was broken through and given up, a never ending retreat set in. When divided by the Rhenus, we imagined ourselves in safety. But for the Alemanni the Rhenus in summer is shallow enough to enable them to wade across, in winter so frozen as to permit them to cross it. Ever and again did they spread over Gaul, thou thyself, our old enemy, knowest the way well." Rothari smiled and the other continued. "When at last thy cousin Rando invaded Mogontiacum

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<sup>1</sup> Breisach.

on the feast of the Epiphany and took prisoners and led away into captivity the congregations of the Basilica, then even the Bishops decided, that watch-towers and forts should be erected on this side of the Rhenus, so that their flocks might hear the word in safety. Augustus has confided this duty to me. The camp below, even Novus Vicus and Lupodunum would not be secure, if we do not fortify these heights."

"That is against all treaties," remarked the Alemann dryly.

"Rome has never considered treaties with barbarians otherwise than as truces. Never shall we make peace with Macrian till our eagles are planted again on the boundary wall, and till once again Mons Taunus is known as the confines of the empire."

"Thou knowest that Macrian's son has escaped from Mogontiacum?" asked Rothari smiling.

"Escaped?" replied the terrified Arator. "Then let the guilty accomplice keep his head away from Valentinian's rage."

"Yesterday I received the news which I can depend upon. A German bearing the imperial mandate enrolled himself among the hostages, so

as to teach them the use of weapons according to the customs of our land. No less a man than Comes Merobaudes had procured this permission for him, but even on the day following the stranger together with Macrian's son had disappeared. How that could be possible remains a mystery to the present hour. The youth was missing at breakfast, and no tortures could compel the other youths to betray the secret of the flight, although Merobaudes ordered these poor victims to their honour to be flogged till the blood ran down."

"Bad, very bad!" exclaimed Arator. "That portends war, and we require peace."

"So long as Macrian receives his tribute," said the young German consolingly, "will he keep the peace."

"Rome pays no tribute," replied the Comes, quickly drawing himself up, "but gives presents to the barbarians."

"Which the latter come for when not paid to the day," rejoined Rothari in an indifferent manner.

The Comes looked at him fixedly, as if he wished to read into his very heart, but the young warrior returned the gaze. "I have drunk blood-

brotherhood with Gratian," said he, "that binds me to his father's cause. I will keep my faith even against my clan and people as behoves a German. Do not therefore hold deceit and fraud to be the best means to oppose the Alemanni." Thus conversing the two men reached the brow of the foremost hill, from whence a wide view might be had. "Behold there the father of rivers, the Rhénus," cried out Rothari joyfully, "equally sacred to both Germans and Romans!" It was indeed an enchanting scene that presented itself to the eyes of the warriors. The green plain at their feet stretched out to the far mountains in the dim distance, and in this velvety carpet the serpentine Nicer traced its silver arabesques. In the horizon the influx of this river into the Rhénus could be plainly seen, which as some glittering silver streak sent up from the blue distant horizon its sparkling beams, encircling with its bright band long stretched-out well wooded islands, its banks sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left surrounded by gleaming broad lagunes or dark pine woods.

"What is yonder dome that sparkles so clearly by the Rhénus?" asked Rothari.

"Knowest thou not the gilded pinnacle, in the midst of the palace and the leaden parapet, which Symmachus praises in his oration?"

"Ha, Alta Ripa!" <sup>1</sup> cried the German. "How distinctly the Munimentum stands out from the bright gleaming stream behind! But what is the town with the bridge, surely it is Noviomagus." <sup>2</sup>

"Quite right, the town of the Nemetes. On a clear day one can see the bridge of boats which Valentinian made and defended by a dam. To the left thou canst see the harbour in which lie the beaked watch ships. Here to the north, where the blue ridge of mountains is traceable by its fine line from the heaven, lies Borbetomagus,<sup>3</sup> the capital of the Vangiones." The satiated eyes of the warriors now gazed at the beauteous panorama lying at their feet. "There is my villa," said the Comes, and he pointed to the last house of the Novus Vicus, which reached with its gardens and orchards close up to the slope, so that one could see into the open viridia and peristyles of the houses. A long streak of poor houses and wooden

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<sup>1</sup> Altrip.

<sup>2</sup> Speier.

<sup>3</sup> Worms.



huts on the other side of the river which the bridge joined to the camp corresponded to the village on this side of the river. From thence a star of straight roads radiated to the neighbouring Roman towns. The plain was again partly under cultivation, and distance hid to the eye the shattered condition of the houses and farms which stood out here and there.

"A blessed land," cried out Rothari, "well worth fighting for. The country between us and you resembles some fair dancing girl, clad in green and blue garments, with glittering bands of silver and steel; it is no wonder that the Alemanni and Romans quarrel about her. I wish the land were mine, that I could build up again the towns, which we have burnt down within the last twenty years."

Thus saying he turned again towards the path leading to the heights, which here was barricaded by a high wall. "The old fort of the Alemanni," said Arator, preparing to climb through the white blossoming blackberries the stone piles on which the sun baked down. The barbaric fort was shaped out of huge blocks, the interstices filled up with small stones, and formed a parapet round the entire ridge of the mountain. High up above

a smaller *ring* was visible which also enclosed the two peaks of the mountain. "Here the Alemanni gathered their entire tribe together with women, children, and herds, as the last war began."

"It must have been hard work to storm these trenches," said the German.

"They evacuated them so soon as they were outflanked, and I regret that contrary to my orders our vanguard acted with the greatest cruelty against their women and children."

The recollection was not pleasing to the old general, and preceding the young man he quickly climbed up the sides of the stone fort.

### CHAPTER III.

WHILE the Roman and German climbed up Mons Piri thus engaged in conversation, two Alemanni rested within the inner side of the ring which surrounded the peak. Amongst the blooming hedges they had stretched themselves out at ease on the stone heated by the sun as if resting after a weary tramp. They wore short leather drawers around their loins, the upper part of the body

was naked, the wolfskin cloaks which usually covered their backs being used as pillows. They gave themselves up to a thorough enjoyment of the sun's heat and gazed comfortably upwards at the deep blue sky. The parcel of skins which lay near them, would lead to the supposition that they were dealers carrying their barbarous wares into Gaul. The younger one arose and stretched out his limbs as if to render them supple. Slim as some young fir stood he there, a thorough Alemann with his fair hair and bright blue eyes. The elder stirred not, but gazed with fatherly pride on the handsome boy.

"How many years have elapsed, Father, since the Romans crossed the Rhenus and waged war against us?" now asked the youth.

"That is now long since, Hortari," said the bearded warrior as he stretched himself comfortably out. "During the reign of the first Augustus they invaded Rhætia up to the Danube, and at midnight crossed the Rhine, where flow its broadest waters, and forced their way by land up to the Taunus. Then the Suevi of Rhætia, Gaul, and Moenus found themselves encircled threefold by faithless Rome and the land of their fathers became

estranged to them. For this cause king Marobad gathered his people together and retiring eastwards formed a mighty empire in Bohemia. The Romans built the limes from the Danubius to the Rhenus and annexed the land thus forsaken to their empire. Italians of all races came from Rhætia and Gaul and cultivated the fields. Soon there was no spot left which they had not seized and they occupied their towns, in which they hived together as do the bees and swarmed like ants. We left them unmolested for quite two hundred years. Then they had an emperor whom they called Caracalla, who was wily as Loki's wolf, so that he even slew his own brother, as their first king had also done. Exactly one hundred and fifty years ago, he attacked in Mœnus on the other side of their boundary wall a tribe of the Suevi, which ploughed the land in peace, butchered woman and children and set fire to the huts—and did that only to be entitled Germanicus and celebrate a triumph. Then the great alliance of the Alamanni was founded, to take revenge against faithless Rome. The fifth of our line before me began the war, and thou the seventh wilt end it. The fortune of war fluctuated, but their forts were broken down, their

fortresses burnt, at one time we entered into Gaul and burnt their towns, at another they marched through our woods setting fire and wasting, but we always drove them back into Gaul. Only within the last few years things do not go as they should. As thou wert a boy of four, we lost a great battle near Argentoratum. The Romans had a brave and skilful general, named Julian, but his emperor trusted him not and recalled him. But he who now rules is also a brave man. There yonder on the Rhene lies the fort on our bank which he built, there canst thou see the town of the Nemetes, where he has thrown over a bridge, and as I fear, here also do they wish to settle down. For this reason am I here to see what they are doing. But, Hortari, my boy, now that thou art rested after our hard march, do thou find thy way alone through the woods. They might recognise us should we remain together. Not being three, in which case we might cut our way through, it is better to be each for himself. Keep on above till thou strikest upon the old pear tree, then creep through the bushes till thou reachest the higher wood which conceals thee. Then go on ever eastwards till thou comest to

the huts of our people which cannot be far from here; there thou wilt easily be told, where thou hast to go."

The older man had not quite finished, when steps were audible on the other side of the wall. "Quick, quick," he said, "they come, hasten off." The young man seized his spear, cast a farewell glance from out his clear eyes at his father, and then dipped down into the bushes, whilst the latter sank back on his wolfskin. Behind him the new comers climbed slowly upwards, the stones might be heard rolling under their feet as they stopped. There seemed to be two. "What doest thou here?" the German heard an imperious voice ask.

"Hides, hides," answered he, pointing to his bundle, as if he did not understand the language of the Roman.

"Make off from here, otherwise the soldiers may tan thy hide," answered Arator haughtily, and the German took up his wares; but he could not have understood the warning, for he climbed upwards to where the men were at work.

The trumpet had just sounded the call for rest, and one soldier after the other threw his tools aside. The greater number sought rest and

shade in the work huts. Many lay down at full length in the high grass, and let the refreshing breeze pour into their lungs heated by dust and work, others slept or pulled out their provisions to strengthen wearied nature. Only two muscular forms, who were hewing a large corner stone from out a huge block of rock, continued working as if they had not heard the bugle-call, and as if the actions of the others concerned them in no way. They nevertheless seemed to watch one another as if to see who would first put down his implements, exchanging black inimical glances. We already know the fair one, Lupicinus, who the day previous had helped Vulfilaich to arrange Rothari's property. He first became weary of the struggle. With a look of contempt for his dark-haired adversary he cast down his hammer, and stepped up to the coal fire, on which simmered two pots. The one he placed to one side, the other he took up, so that he might fall to on the bacon and cabbage it contained. His companion, the Roman Salvius, worked on with a sarcastic grin. At last, however, he turned for his meal, but seeing that Lupicinus had removed his pot from the fire, he broke out into a torrent of abuse,

and as at that moment the culprit was about to place his own vessel once more on the remaining coals, he stepped up towards him, the pot smashed and the contents were poured over the flames, which they extinguished with a hissing sound. In a moment the two men had hold of each other and amidst abuse began wrestling. The other workmen seemed accustomed to such a spectacle, for they did not attempt to separate the combatants. Above a dozen others came out of the huts and leaning against the wooden walls looked on at the fight as comfortably as if it were a gladiatorial spectacle. Whilst the entire attention of the soldiers was taken up by the exciting sight, the foreign dealer went unmolested up and down through the works whilst his sharp eye took in everything on all sides. Finally he sat down by a bush, from whence he could view undisturbed the whole plan. But in the mean time the general's sharp ear had heard in the distance how the pleasing sound of the pick had given place to hideous shouts. With a firm tread the old warrior strode along the second inner wall and hastened towards the huts, leaving Rothari behind. Above it seemed as if the swarthy Salvius must succumb



under the powerful blows of his fairer adversary. The wary Roman had first fainted at Lupicinus' face and then delivered a quick blow at the chest which knocked Lupicinus over. But the latter at once picked himself up and rained down a perfect shower of well aimed blows on the Italian's dark head, which he vainly endeavoured to guard. Suddenly the general's red cloak appeared among the bushes. "What is going on here!" cried out Arator in his commanding voice, as his eagle eye sought the overseer. "The Comes, attention, the Comes!" was now heard on all sides. "By the pains of the mother of the Gods, attention!" "By Hercules, are you off your heads!" "May Mithras hit you with his bolts, will you be quiet!" were the shouts now heard on all sides. The overseer stepped forward in great confusion. He shrugged his shoulders in displeasure, and said in a half-whisper, "These two Christians hate each other, because the one holds to a bishop, the other to a presbyter, but it is Salvius who always begins a quarrel, there will be no peace, till he together with his presbyter are sent across the Rhenus."

"Hear him not, Lord!" rejoined angrily a pale overgrown young man. "Gaius is a worshipper of

idols. Even when we were shaping on Mons Melibocus the pillars of Augustus, from whence we were driven out by an attack of the Alemanni, had he instituted mysteries to the dæmon of the mountain, in which he admitted everybody who gave him twelve onions. He even invites women and maidens to the disgusting feats of his idol Melibocus. Thou canst yet see the altars which he there erected to those devils."

"Be still, thou lunatic Priscillian!" replied the insulted overseer, "it is well known how you carry on in your conventicles. You should be brought before the judges."

"That is true," now called out Gaius' adherents, "something must be done against the disciples of Priscillianus."

"No, it is Salvius, who incites people one against the other," called out now the minority even louder.

"Silence!" commanded the Comes angrily. "He who utters a murmur, or even makes a wry face, shall be sent for six months to dig out the Munimentum at Alta Ripa. If Gaius manages mysteries better than the keeping of order, I must

give the command to another. As a punishment for your ill-conduct you must all keep at work to-day till sunset. You know that I have forbidden all religious disputes, here under the sword of the Alemanni." He now turned towards the two opponents: "How can you," he said, addressing more seriously Salvius and Lupicinus, "two brave soldiers who have received the wreath of honour, disgrace your reputation by such wretched discussions. Leave those to the priests, and in order that you may again be reconciled as at that time when you were the pride of the whole cohort, march off to Mons Valentiniani and take duty on the watch tower. When you have housed together for forty days, you will have again learnt to endure one another. Evocatus, relieve the guards yonder, Salvius and Lupicinus take duty on the other side of the Nicer." The Evocatus motioned to the pugilists, who taking up their weapons and saluting the Comes by dropping the point of the sword marched down the forest path whilst the Comes returned to his companion. He found Rothari near a small altar to Mercury, which the soldiers had restored, and on which was inscribed in almost illegible letters *Mercurio Cimbrio*. "Who were

the men?" asked the German, as Arator came up, "they fought well."

"You would scarcely believe it, but they were Salvius and Lupicinus, about whom I was telling you, who so bravely began the attack at Solicinium, that even my old heart of soldier beats high thereat even at the present day."

"Thus are they friends but during battle, at other times they quarrel?"

"By no means. From their earliest childhood have they loved each other, their paternal houses and fields adjoined. As children, so did Lupicinus once relate to me, did they sit on the same sandheap, as boys did they together snare birds in the woods or standing on the reedy bank of the Nicer pelt frogs with stones. Together did they enter the service of the Emperor, and in battle fought shoulder to shoulder."

"Well, and what brought about the variance?"

"That which has spread dissension in the whole world," replied the Comes with a gesture of contempt. "The one worships the consubstantial God of Nicæa, the other the consimilar demi-god of Philippopolis, the one holds to a bishop, the other to a presbyter."

"Would that all presbyters and bishops sat in Hel's kingdom, or that Fenrir's wolf which swallows up even sun and moon, would gobble them up," burst out the German.

"That thy God avail against the priests of Christ," said Arator, "is all the same to me. Mine have helped me in no way against them. But thou hast now some idea of my task. I must carry out Valentinian's mighty plans with people who hate one another and preserve secrecy, whilst the Arians on this side and the Arians on the other side are more closely allied than Roman to Roman, if one happens to be a Nicene and the other a disciple of Areios."

"The believers in the new God," said Rothari, "knock each other's heads off, while in the meantime the worshippers of the old gods restore their altars," and he pointed laughing to the inscriptions to the Cimbrian Mercury.

It seemed as if on that day the general's complaint about the want of unity among his men was to be confirmed once more, for yet another dispute arose in the other huts.

"That's Syagrius' voice," said Arator angrily, "the venomous Notarius, who indeed knows nothing

about war, but nevertheless directs the building of a fort, because Valentinian deems it prudent never to trust an undertaking to one man."

"Is the little man, who carried his head as if he were a heron, the celebrated Notarius? He purposely seemed to avoid us."

"He loves me not, and is angry that the emperor has sent in thee a third director. It is not the building, but me that he has to overlook. Luckily he fell at once desperately in love with Jetta, and I owe it to my daughter's beauteous eyes, that trouble is not my daily bread. But let us thither, there seems to be no end to the haranguing." As if accidentally, so as not to excite the raging Syagrius, Arator and Rothari approached the scene of the new dispute, and noticed even from afar how angrily the Notarius was addressing the soldiers, whilst the German who had already been warned off by Arator, was exhibiting his skins to the soldiers for sale, without minding in the least the passionate little man. "We have become effeminate," said the Comes, "since we evacuated this side of Germany. In the very country in which formerly the soldiers were satisfied with a deer-skin flayed from the animal they themselves

had slain, they now demand heated huts. And even after that I granted fires in their huts, they now dispute over the hides of this bear-skin."

"Order the arrest of this man, Comes," cried out the red-bearded Notarius, "he is here as a spy."

"How can that be, he does not understand a word of our language," replied the Comes good-naturedly.

"For that very reason. I saw him yesterday in Alta Ripa, there he understood our language thoroughly, and joked like a Roman Quirite with the soldiers."

"Art thou certain that he is the same man?"

"Ho!" called out Syagrius, "thou acorn grubbing German pig, washed for the first and last time on the day of thy birth, by thy mother licking thee all over, wert thou not yesterday in Alta Ripa?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"And did thy Latin then fall into the Nicer, as thou wert ferried across?"

"People pay better, if one appears a little stupid," answered the German naïvely.

"Thou art not here to make money, but seekest other prices," stormed the red-headed man.

"Pardon me, my Lord," answered the dealer humbly, "I see thou art not to be deceived. I in truth came up here to visit the sacred pear-tree, near which my ancestors sacrificed. There did I wish to register a vow."

"Rubbish," said the Notarius. "Thou remainest about here, and the sacred tree is higher up, so long as it remains. Tell thy bear-skins that we shall cut it down, so that no more come sneaking about here."

"Say not that," interposed Arator, "for Augustus has forbidden the cutting down of sacred trees, my friend was only joking." But Syagrius at this denial roared out, "Does this man look as if he had climbed up here to pray? Wilt thou arrest him or not?"

At this the stranger drew up to his full height. His eyes sparkled with rage, as he answered with barely concealed passion. "Thou art right, Roman, something else has brought me here, which I unwillingly relate. Here," he cried, stretching out his sinewy arms towards the stone-wall, "here two years ago fell my aged parents, as the Roman spares neither white hairs nor weak women. Here," and he pointed downwards, "a pilum slew my wife, here, a stone dashed out the brains of



my only daughter. I alone was left," and an eye filled with defiance met the gaze of the Notarius. "I came to weep in the woods, whence you dashed all my joys. I should then have left, had I not been ordered away by this man."

"Take him in custody," replied the Notarius. "I do not believe a single word of his touching tale. I know what he seeks here."

The Comes shook his gray head doubtfully, whilst he fastened his gaze on the barbarian, as if trying to connect his appearance with former recollections. He seemed as if inwardly struggling with himself. Rothari now stepped up. "I know this brave man. He came formerly to Treves and dealt in hides. The skin I wear is one of his make. Since then the poor man has fallen low, his misery has distracted him. Let him go quietly away."

"Wilt thou go bail for him before Valentinian?" asked the Notarius sharply and angrily.

"Before him or any other man," replied Rothari, bringing the shaft of his spear down with such force that the rock shook. The little statesman turned pale and stepped back. In the meanwhile the Comes had collected himself. "I pray

thee, Rothari," he said in a low voice, "accompany this man, speak confidently to him, and tell him that we are quarrying building material for Alta Ripa, nothing else." Rothari smiled and joined the stranger. The Comes accompanied the Notarius, and thus they parted. The German gathered up his hides, slung the pack across his shoulders and hurried forwards with mighty steps. One could see how important it was for him to get out of the scrape with a whole skin. When they had left the soldiers at some distance, Rothari halted and said in a low voice:

"Has Wodan distracted thee, king Macrian, that thou thyself venturkest into the eagle's eyrie?"

"And which of Elberich's pigmies has deranged thee, son of Vadomar, that thou wearest the chains of the eagle? It is thy duty to avenge the death of Vithikab, and thou consortest with his murderers."

"No tie now binds me to my tribe. Thou knowest what severs me from you; at that time I left in rage, to-day a holy oath binds me down, the love for Rome, which is a thousand times stronger, I have felt it. But how low must the warriors of my people have sunk, when they suffer

their king in person to go out spying." And he gave a mocking laugh.

"The eyes of the king are clearer than the eyes of the servant," replied the king.

"Yea verily, they are lazy servants."

"No, Rothari, I spoke not the truth. I came myself for other reasons. The eyes of a father see ways when a stranger sees none. I carried off my son."

"That did I hear, but where is the fair Hortari?"

"After that I had loosened the chain, I let the young falcon fly. He can find for himself the way to the mountains. One steals through more safely than two. I also wanted to examine the new bulwark on the Rhenus, where this red owl saw me yesterday, who nearly ruined me. I also wished to know what they were about on this hill of our disaster. It is indeed a tower?"

"Building material for Alta Ripa, said Arator."

"And doest thou believe that? The stones so beautifully arranged and the measuring tape at hand? Let him who believes you credit it. But we can wait. How many men are there in the camp by the Nicer?"

"More than will be pleasing to thee, when thou visitest us. Me also wilt thou meet, and the sword once drawn by Vadomar. But if on the other hand thou wouldst treat with Valentinian as friend, then speak. I have full powers."

The king threw down his bundle, opened it and pulled out from among the skins a short battle-axe which he tightly griped in his hand. One movement of the head, and the hair which fell over his face flew back. "Tell Valentinian," he said, "I treat not with a murderer and perjurer. Vithikab he assassinated, and has broken treaties sworn to. I shall wait to see whether he contrary to his oaths builds a fort on yonder mountain. Then shall we fall upon him as Donar's bolt from out the dark cloud. They showed us how to storm such mountains. Ten opposed to one, then is all easily overcome, even the entrance to Hel's gate. To thee, however, son of Vadomar, do I repeat, return home to thy people. Wait not to learn the wiles of the Italians. Be not dazzled by the glittering show. Thy tribe defrauded thee rudely, the Italians will deceive thee with elegance, will suck out thy marrow, poison thy blood, thou wilt learn atrocities of which an Ale-

mann does not even dream." Rothari shook his head angrily as answer. "As thou wilt," said Macrian. "Thou wilt regret it. I have seen many driven away by a hasty word spoken by a brother who later suffered himself to be trodden under foot by strangers. Thou wilt thyself experience this at some time and wilt wish to return home to the halls of thy fathers, and then I shall show my gratitude to thee, for not having betrayed me this day."

Rothari smiled, but answered respectfully, "Farewell, my king."

"Farewell, my hero."

More slowly than he had come, did Rothari return out of the wood, to which he had accompanied Macrian, and it was not the ascent which caused such frequent halts. Macrian's words had sunk into his innermost heart. He felt as if he must follow after the king and return to the dark log-houses of his people, from whom he had once parted in wrath. However difficult it was then to endure, the wound had now healed over, and he would have once again entered without animosity into his home between Spechtshard <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Spessart.

and the wood of Wodan. But as he thought over the king's warning glorious visions of the Roman world appeared before his eyes; Christian basilicæ, Hellenic temples, Roman theatres, and all the gorgeousness of the culture of the ancients, in whose splendour his susceptible soul revelled. He thought of that hour, the culminating point of his whole existence, when he at Rome had sacrificed on the altar of the highest and best Jupiter—and now to return to the oaken groves, to the insipid meditations and sacred trees by nights full of horror to the horse broth, he could not do it. Nearly a hundred years had passed over since Alemanni had annexed that part of Upper Germany on this side of the river, and what had they made out of this once beauteous land. The temples and altars were broken down, the towns fell to ruin of themselves, as no one was there, to keep them up. The ingenious Romans had retired to the other side of the Rhenus, a heap of defenceless miserable coloni had taken refuge behind the walls, where they crowded together like sheep to escape the rough handling of the hordes of wandering, plundering barbarians, and whilst fever and plagues filled the cisterns of these ruined towns, the ancient

water pipes which no one looked after poured their crystal streams in the fields and turned fertile plains into bogs, marshes and fens. Thus did it look everywhere at that time in the land of the Decumates. Owls and frogs made their homes in the villas and courts, or the horses of the peasants trampled on the mosaic pavements of a higher artistic period. On the other hand how quickly the valley at the influx of Nicer into Rhenus prospered, since Valentinian had caused this strip, to the mountains, to be surrendered up by Macrian. He knew that the warlike monarch thought of winning back the entire plain from Mons Taunus to Rhætia. The idea of fighting for such a plan had greater inducements for him than the inborn prejudice in favour of family and blood. Moreover the revelations of the Roman religion had disclosed a new home to him. Apollo, Mithras, Christ were to him representatives of a pure world of a divine light as opposed to the misty, dissolving cloud images of his native deities, who had so terrified his youth. It pleased him, when the white-clad sons and daughters of the Roman aristocracy ascended the steps of the temple of Apollo singing the hymn of praise, it moved him, when

the bishop in his stola headed a procession of the faithful in the Basilica whilst church banners fluttered, a richly dressed clergy aspersed, incensed, and chanted psalms. Above all the horrors of the Mithraic grotto, the initiations to which he had undergone, and the sevenfold solemn oath which sealed his lips impressed him. It was therefore his highest desire to dip deeper in those mysteries, whose symbols portentous with meaning had at that time been disclosed to him. He had felt, as if the veil which hid from him the depths of nature, the mysteries of life, the secrets of the god-head, was about to be rolled back before him. The order of the Emperor called him away from the metropolis. He quitted Rome, but with his whole soul he longed once more to stand within the grotto of Mithras, and to hear the unravelling word from the mouth of the holy father crowned with the golden cap, which lay in that dread hour even then on the lips of that revered elder. All those feelings arose once more in Rothari's soul. People and religion disputed as to which should possess him, but he himself had long decided. His soul was Roman, only the body with its fair hair and blue eyes was German, so did he imagine.



As Rothari filled with such thoughts issued out of the forest towards the huts, Arator came some distance to meet him, and asked him eagerly what he had told the dealer.

"That which thou didst order me. I also pointed out to him the nearest way," answered Rothari shortly.

The Comes would willingly have inquired further. He evidently kept back some question. He almost seemed as if he also had a secret on his mind which oppressed him. Thus buried in thought, they both wound their way down the mountain. The green plain gleamed in the midday sun like an emerald, and the white clouds sailed in the blue heavens like silver ships whose light sails bellied more and more changing with every breath of wind. The two warriors, silently affected by the opening life of springtide, strode through the blossoming trees till the elder halted before the first house of the village. The door opened and Rothari read on the stone floor. "Be thou welcome, thou who comest with an honest heart." The youth halted and his eyes sought those of the Comes, who since the occurrence on the mountain had walked silently by his side as if weighed

down by some heavy care. Leaning on his spear the German gazed modestly, almost beseechingly, into the eyes of the older man. Arator gazed at him with astonishment. "Dost thou hesitate?"

"Before I hide my head under thy hospitable roof," said Rothari, "I must unburden my soul. The greeting here warns me not to deceive thee."

Calmly and proudly did the Roman look at the flushed countenance of the young man. "He whom thou didst dismiss on my recommendation," said Rothari, and his voice sounded hollow as the words came out slowly from his lips, "was Macrian."

Arator smiled: "I knew it."

"Thou knewest it," said the astonished Rothari; "and let him escape?"

"Under such suspicious circumstances I should have let none other go, but to arrest the king was to declare war. The German wolves would have followed his track, even had I sent him to Augusta Treverorum. What thanks, believest thou, that Valentinian would have owed me, had I unbidden given him as present a war with the Alemanni? What could I do with the king? It is all the same to us if the barbarians attack us under Macrian, Rando, or Chnodamar, their chiefs

resemble each other, as does one wolf the other, we wish however to delay the war till yonder fort is built, the bulwarks before Alta Ripa completed, and the walls of Lupodunum repaired, then they may come on. Now a war would be premature, especially as we are threatened by the Quadi, and are not sure of the Burgundians." Rothari looked astonished. "That, my young friend, is diplomacy. The diplomacy of to-day," added Arator sadly. "We are no longer ancient Rome, and I am not Camillus."

"Thus thou art not displeased, that I endeavoured to deceive thee?"

"To spite Syagrius I was rather pleased that thou didst take the risk on thyself. I therefore thank thee for the deception, and also for thy confession, which strengthens our mutual confidence. And now be thou welcome to Arator's home."

#### CHAPTER IV.

Arator had assigned for the use of his guest an apartment of commodious rooms near the Atrium,

round whose walls and cornices hung Rothari's glittering weapons and ornaments as arranged by Lupicinus and the monk. After that Rothari had cast another satisfied glance at the paternal treasures so mysteriously returned to him, he sank down on his couch, wearied by his morning's work, to sleep the happy sleep of youth. When he awoke the sun was already sinking. The German peeped through a slit in the heavy felt curtains out into the Atrium. It seemed to him that he heard the rustling of a female garment as well as a light creeping step. "Cats' paws make no noise," yawned the soldier, "and beasts of prey slink off lightly." Thus saying he jumped up and shook the sleep from out his eyes. How beautifully gleamed the rays of the setting sun on the red frieze, and the variegated mosaic of the floor to his eye, which for the last few weeks on awaking had ever only seen the lime floors and straw-walls of the soldiers' huts or the smoky blockhouses of the Alemanni. Whilst complacently taking note of this change of situation, a figure appeared through the slit of the curtain, which did not quite accord with this joyous beauty. A very old woman, whose clothes fluttered sadly about her bent limbs, hobbled here

and there setting a table. Her dishevelled gray locks fell about her face. Chin and cheeks were sown over with a white down. The lips had sunk in over the toothless mouth. The nerveless lid had fallen down so deep over one eye, that she appeared to have but one, but in that seeing eye, which every now and then looked towards his room, there gleamed a fire, which bore witness to a brain full of life. Rothari stepped out and noticed that the old woman had spread a small table with fruits. "Thanks, mother," he said, "thou art the busy housekeeper here, or what shall I call thee?"

"Phorkyas," squeaked out the old woman. "A suitable name," thought the German. "She looks indeed like one of the gray Phorkydæ, who among the three could only boast of one tooth and one eye. But with teeth like mine, worthy Phorkyas," said he laughing, "one prefers biting into a leg of mutton rather than the juicy fruits of the south."

"Yes, yes," she replied, "they are beautiful. Julius Cæsar also praised them."

"Julius Cæsar!" laughed Rothari, "then you

are well preserved. So you knew him also, mother. How old art thou then?"

"Old, my Lord, very old. So thou wouldst prefer meat. Verily they all descend from the gray beasts of the woods. I saw the first, who crossed the Alps. At that time they still wore undressed skins. Yes, my Lord, Phorkyas is old, very old. Nevertheless I will bring meat to this wolf," she said, speaking to herself, as she disappeared round the corner.

"She is crazy, weak-minded from age," said Rothari. "I would not have thought it. Her eye is clear and shoots penetrating glances." A more beauteous Hebe and more sustaining fare would have been preferable, nevertheless he did not despise the gifts of the old woman, and strode up and down between Atrium and peristyle for the sake of air, sucking the fruits. The chapel to the right with its Lares showed him that Arator's household had also remained pagan. After looking for some time at the flowers in the viridarium, and studying the bronze tablets in the tablinum with their treaties and records, he mounted a flight of stairs higher, to see whether his servants had not yet arrived, or whether Arator had re-

turned. Walking about the passage above the peristyle he saw, through an open door and the hall lying opposite, the range of mountains towards Lupodunum so beautifully illuminated by the setting sun, that he could not resist the temptation and entered the room. When the glow reflected on the reddish blue mountain chain had died away, his eye roved about the bright handsomely frescoed room. Beautiful genii and wreaths of flowers smiled down from the walls, serious masks and gayer Cupids looked on him from all sides. The artistic bronze or marble vases exhibited the shapes of the best times, and all spoke of the neatness and love of beauty of some careful female hand. Bashfully he was about to withdraw when his eye fell on the row of rolls of parchment, which lay scattered about a table near the window. They were all inscribed with curious cabalistic signs, numbers and figures. On one he saw strange amulets, runes, hieroglyphs, or manifold pentagrams, formed by two triangles, which were laid within one another in the most varied combinations. He believed in such powers, and knew that many a hero had forced his way through spears and woods for eighty years and more, through possessing

such a talisman. Hastlily and unseen did he endeavour to impress the secret on his memory. "Take six drachms of pure gold," he read, "make thereof a round coin and inscribe thereon the image of the rising sun in the constellation of the spring moon. Incense the coin with crocus, wash it in rosewater, in which musk and camphor have been dissolved, for they are related to the sun. Carried in a crocus-coloured bag this talisman will render thee successful in all things, and all men will fear thee, and thou wilt receive from kings and princes what thou desirest, and wilt recover what thou mayest have lost, and the gods will pour their blessings on thee and on thine." "Now is the right moment to prepare this," murmured the Alemann. On another sheet he saw horrible characters, and sketches of wondrous genii. Hekate, who dwells in the great moon-cavern might be seen as a huge and terrible figure, having in her hands a torch and sword, with snake feet and snakes in her hair, bayed at by black, woolly dogs. Near by he saw genii with cocks' heads, their bodies terminating as snakes, a male torso with two wolf- or fox-heads, the image of the Abraxas scarab with the radiated head, encircled by the



serpent swallowing its own tail, the emblem of Mnixiel, the dæmon of fecundity, with a female bust, wings, and feet of gryphons and the Aspis hierakomorphos, a salamander with a lion's head. Long lists of the names of dæmons and angels caught his eye on the other lists: Kether, Alektor, Jao Kabao, Ragiel, Tophiel, Raphael, Michael, Samael, and numerous others. These mystical signs had a fascination for the superstitious mind of the German. Wildly and half dazed did he study those rolls. At Rome and Byzantium he had imbibed all the knowledge of the Romans and Greeks, but had not touched upon sorcery, as the emperor threatened banishment or death to any suspected of inquiring through the magic art as to the number of the days of the life of Cæsar and his own prospects. Now for the first time the entire dread apparatus lay exposed to his vision, and he stood then as if rooted before those signs so full of hidden meaning. Could the old woman with whom he had just spoken be the possessor of these secrets? Had she indeed an *elixir vitæ*, and existed on earth already in the days of the Cimbrians and Teutons, as she said, and eaten fruit with Julius Cæsar? She did not

seem much younger. He took up another sheet. Then he found the numbers 4 9 2 arranged out

3 5 7

8 1 6

in three rows one beneath the other. Whatever way he added, upwards, downwards, or cross-wise, he always obtained the result 15. That appeared dæmoniacal to him, and above stood merely *sigillum Saturni!* He saw the holy name of Abraxas written out in seven lines, shortened in each line by one letter, causing the whole to form a triangle, and then increasing again by one letter the name forming a second triangle, and Rothari never wearied of reading this up and down,

ABRAXAS

A

ABRAXA

AB

ABRAX

ABR

ABRA

ABRA

ABR

ABRAX

AB

ABRAXA

A

ABRAXAS

moving his lips like some boy learning verses. Something dreadful was concealed therein. These were the keys to Hel's kingdom, to Loki's secret, to Hekate's arts, the keys which the gods of the

cross-roads guard. He who knew how to use them would find the truth, which Plato and Lucretius vainly sought. Certainly did these rolls belong to the dæmoniactal old woman, or what pale old sorcerer could be their owner? The rustling of a female dress startled the dreaming giant out of his broodings.

A tall maiden entered in through the door, who proud as Diana threw back her head on noticing this entry into her virgin sanctum and the abuse of the right of hospitality. With a wave of the hand full of pride she motioned the intruder to one side. But he as if shaken out of some dream stared with widely opened eyes at the supernatural appearance. On this she stepped up quickly to the table, and as the fairy of the wood protects with her god-like hands the pursued doe, so did she spread her white arms over the rolls, and a deep-toned voice which sounded like smitten brass, called out: "Back, stranger! uninitiated eyes bring a curse upon the sacred signs." But already the dreamy gaze of the German was no longer fixed upon the crooked signs on the parchment. A rune fraught with mystery had gone forth towards him from out the

dark eye of this noble pale face, which seemed with earnest threat to bid him quit the sanctuary. He had imagined the owner of the rolls to be some emaciated Chaldæan, some dried up Thessalian witch, who for yellow gold or white silver would willingly initiate him into these mysteries, and before him stood eternal beauty itself with the pose of a queen. Thus seemed Medea when Jason first disclosed his thievish plans to her. And again he gazed into the unfathomable magic of her eyes deep as the blackest night, and a glowing red coloured his handsome manly features. A slight smile passed like a sun-beam over the maiden's severe face as she noticed his confusion. At that he recollected himself: "Pardon me, noble virgin. This door stood wide open and the look out on the mountains lured me in. I then saw the rolls, which I have so long thirsted to decipher. Perhaps the noble daughter of mine host will grant to me as the first gift of hospitality, the information as to how I may attain that knowledge." The Roman threw back her head and the long black lashes overshadowed her dreaming eyes. Her lips trembled, as if about to ask: "Who art thou, who at our first meeting demandest to read the

secrets of my inward soul?" But there was something so deeply touching in the childish prayer of the strong man, that she gently answered, "From three did I learn the art, to three can I teach it. A heart which I know not, gives me no warrant that it will not misuse the dread power of these sacred signs." The doubt expressed in these words, wounded the sensitive self-love of the German, so that he again pondered over himself. A blush rose to his cheeks as he said with naïve pride, "The Gods have tried Rothari's heart and found it true. It never quaked in more than twenty battles, it trembled not in the hug of the bear. I have slain my foes, but spared the weak, as the gods from whom I descend demand it. Prove this heart and thou wilt find it worthy . . . . to read, what others may read," he added tremblingly, for he felt that this thirsting heart found itself already worthy of quite other things. Surprised, but with inward pleasure, Jetta marked the effect of her words on the mighty warrior. The irritation and the maiden-like blush stood him in good stead. For the first time she remarked that the giant overtopped her by a head. But therefore all the more majestically did she

draw herself up: "Wait in silence," she said, "this gift is not obtained by request, it falls of itself into the lap of him who is worthy," and with a motion of the hand she dismissed him. He bowed as deeply as if before the Augusta, and she suffered him to depart in the same manner as the empress would have done. How he got down the stairs Rothari himself knew not. He found himself in a state of pleasing confusion standing once more in the viridarium before an evergreen shrub: "Who has transplanted thee to this wintry land, thou flower of a fairer sky," he murmured to himself. So great, so real, so simple majesty had he never seen in any woman, not among the proud daughters of Rome, not among the refined daughters of Byzantium, not in the king's halls of the Alemanni. She resembled one of those female forms which had appeared to the immortal poets, but who would have sought the ideal of Nausikaa or Iphigeneia on the slopes of Wodan's wood. Half in dream Rothari felt himself transported back to one of the resting stations of his journey, when on the last day he came to a clearing on one of the declivities of Mons Abnoba, where thorn thickets, thistles and ferns overgrew

the fallen ruins of a dilapidated Roman villa, among which, however, climbed beauteous grapes, and a well stocked garden of roses glowed ruddily out from among the weeds. Thus did the fair maiden appear to him in the confines of the land of the barbarians. Or should he compare her to the variegated crocus, which in the fields outside sprang forth from some forgotten seed out of bramble and weeds. On shutting his eyes he saw the slight figure plainly before him, and dreamily did his brain repeat her every word, her every gesture, and the deep sound of her voice echoed in his ear. At last he shook himself together and an encouraging voice spake in his heart: "Was not the highest prize ever decreed to thee, the most resplendent piece of all the plunder, so long as thou didst head thy people and spring over the walls of the Gallic towns? If I now conquer for Rome, I know the prize I shall demand."

"There he stands before the floweret, the Alemannian swain, ha, ha, ha, gazing at Flora's lovely children, whilst out in the camp they scoff at his honour. Rothari, thou bear, hast thou been sleeping up till now?" Thus saying a tall young man, wearing a golden cuirass and purple tunica, swaggered

into the hall. The childish beardless face betokened the boy, the height and gorgeous apparel gave the appearance of a man. He thus accosted still seemed to dream. "Cæsar Gratian!" he stammered, "thou here? How camest thou to Novus Vicus?"

"On thy black steed, as thy groom. I have brought thy horses for thee, my blood-brother. By Hercules, by St. Peter, I meant, or which of the apostles could best ride? Well, in any case thy charger cut out my work for me." And the youthful comer, picturesquely attired in his costly armour and flowing red cloak, threw himself into a seat and seemed to enjoy laughingly his friend's astonishment.

"I understand none of this, where then is the mighty Augustus?"

"He came as far as Alta Ripa to meet thee. Since the adventure with Mica he loves thee as a bear. As he promised thee, he let the other beast, Innocentia, loose in the woods."

Rothari nodded approvingly.

"Thou, my fair-headed Hercules, standest half-way in the odour of sanctity. Bishop Ithacius celebrated the release of Innocentia in a sermon in the Basilica, in which he lauded in three parts,



the beneficence, mildness and justice of the Augustus, who at times kills, at others releases bears. Thou wert not mentioned. But if thou wouldest only let thyself be baptised, which I advised thee to do long ago, he would write on thee an exceedingly touching martyrologium: Rothari in the bear-pit. A martyrologium in which undoubtedly my father would figure as Nero or Trajan. My little brother, Justina's son, now feeds white rabbits in Mica's cage. Unfortunately for the bishop, on the very morning of his eloquent discourse Innocentia had torn a peasant girl to pieces close to the walls of the town, and all the congregation knew this as Ithacius delivered his panegyricus. He had just learnt his speech, poor man, what could he do? Towards the end he cobbled up a prayer, in which he begged the Almighty to restrain the raging of the savage beast, who at Satan's instigation misusing the emperor's clemency tore children to pieces. I could scarcely wait for the blessing to be spoken. I then called my dogs, tracked the beast and the same evening stuck her with my hunting-spear. I can now hit at thirty paces."

"That was well done, my Augustus. But

thou said'st just now that I was being slandered in the camp."

"Ah, yes, the camp!" said the young man, passing his fingers through his closely-cropped black hair, as a sarcastic smile curled his lip. "I must naturally live in the prætorium to set an example. And the soldier's soup I must grudge to Ithacius. About thee,—well, Syagrius said that thou didst help a spy through, who came sneaking about our castellum."

"I did that."

"Hem, and what thinkest thou will my father say?"

"He will praise me."

"I shall be curious to hear him."

"And what has Your Lordship been doing?"

"I have also been spying."

"Successfully?"

"With as great power of detection as if I had Syagrius' nose," so saying the young man laid hold of his own to make sure that such an evil had not come to pass. "First I have found out that contrary to all good discipline Syagrius has smuggled Gallic wine into the camp, which besides being injurious to him touches up his liver.

I told him that when a tower had a disproportion-able bow this ought not to be painted red. As a fact his nose is burning red, and I believe that when he sticks it in water, it hisses, and dost thou know, that he gives out that thing to be a Roman nose?" Rothari laughed. "So first thou didst discover Syagrius' wine, for his nose thou didst know long since about."

"Secondly there is here a Mithras cave."

"Here on the Nicer?"

"A hundred paces from this house."

"Wilt thou order it to be destroyed?"

"I, I intend attending the mysteries."

"Thou art a Christian."

"Pah, the family of the Augustus must hold with all religions. My father is so to speak a Nicene, nevertheless he has issued strict orders to protect each party's property. Justina sides with the Arians, for that reason the great church lights, Martinus, Ambrosius, and Ithacius are opposed to her. I have received from my father a hint, to side with the pagans, so as to bind them to our family. The Augustus goes to the Basilica, the Augusta has private Arian church service, and the Cæsar visits the cave, thus we lead them

all by the nose. Valentinian calls that dynastic policy."

"Thus within two hours thou hast made thyself quite at home," said Rothari evasively.

"I have even fallen in love."

"By Hercules, what a diligent youth, thou hast lost no time. What does she look like, this new love of thine?"

"Exactly like the tenth Muse, I tell thee."

"Hair?"

"Black snakes like those of Medusa."

"Has she eyes?"

"Eyes like Velleda, legendary eyes, black Light. Styx with Olympus in the background. Such eyes had Persephone, the Sibyl of Cumæ, Dido of Karthago, Médea of Kolchis, Pythia and Semiramis."

"Thou hast forgotten Kassandra," said Rothari drily. He felt uncomfortable. A suspicion arose within him, that Gratian had not come to this house only for his sake. Did he himself also not love within the half-hour a Sibyl and Medea? At that moment the sounding of signals was heard outside. "By Jupiter and Maria," cried Gratian, "that must be Syagrius. The whole afternoon

the mannikin has been setting our brave troops on the trail of the spy, whom thou didst suffer to escape."

"Syagrius?" said Rothari, turning pale with rage. "Does the Comes set the man free and the Notarius pursue him?"

"Yes, Arator will be angry. It is a whim of my father to ever oppose two commanders one to the other, who regularly come to blows."

"For that reason our affairs get on so beautifully," said Rothari angrily.

"He thinks thus to prevent conspiracies and plots. But I must be off to the camp. I have already let the afternoon slip by."

"The sun is under, Augustus, that cannot be denied," said Rothari, smilingly looking upwards at the sky, in which already the stars shone.

"Farewell, Barbarian, to-morrow I shall visit both thee and Medea again." Thus saying the young prince clanked out, whilst the German politely, but with an evil wrinkle on his forehead, accompanied him to the boundary of the garden. The darkness of the night concealed Rothari's dark looks, and the good-natured boy suspecting nothing swung himself into the saddle and trotted off.

## CHAPTER V.

Cæsar Gratianus had rightly surmised. The bugle call which sounded from the camp and echoed shrilly through the woods, had to do with the mysterious dealer whom Arator had set free and whom Syagrius was tracking down. Gaius the overseer, humiliated at the reproof which he had received and urged on by the presence of the Notarius, incited his men, immediately after Rothari's and Arator's departure, to their work. Two of the soldiers who had finished shaping that very morning their free-stones, in searching about the woods to find some erratic block, came upon the bundle of skins, which shortly before the German had thrown aside. In triumph they bore their booty back to the huts, to make ready for themselves and their friends comfortable couches on which to spend the nights, which were still chilly. The shout of joy and the unwonted movements attracted the Notarius and his diplomatic nose smelled out at once how matters really stood. His first thought was: "The dealer in skins is

something more than a spy. He who throws such wares aside is not some mere plebeian. Most probably he had something to do with the escape of the king's son from Mogontiacum." The second thought referred to Rothari. "He has aided the escape of the traitor. This is a conspiracy in which the German Merobaudes also plays a part," and he immediately determined to report to the Emperor. At the third thought, he contentedly stroked his well-combed beard, as it ran thus: "Arator also has exposed himself. I shall receive his office—"here, however, his thoughts were troubled. A tall figure, black flashing eyes, a delicate female hand raised authoritatively, dispelled his evil purposes. "Thus or thus," he murmured. "In any case it renders the proud father pliable."

"Hollo there!" he called out to the soldiers. "The dealer who deceived the Comes is an emissary of Macrian, a noble Alemann, perhaps he who aided the escape of Macrian's son. He who brings him back is Cæsar's friend, and will be better rewarded than if he broke stones for a hundred years. Hurry up quick, without noise, so that the game be not scared. I shall go down the hollows and catch him in case he crosses the

Nicer. Do you run up to the top and see if he works back for the plain. Do thou, Gaius, follow up his track with twelve others. Take the two dogs with thee. Let them first sniff at the skins, so that they may know whom they hunt. I shall at once cross the stream with the men of the lower hut, to watch yonder bank. We must bring in alive or dead the scoundrel who spied over three Roman *castella*, and whom the faithless Rothari aided to escape." In a moment the soldiers were ready for the work. Such a chase pleased them better than hewing stones under the burning rays of the midday sun. The sound of the chisel was dumb, the hunters broke away on all sides.

In the meanwhile the Alemann had kept along the forest-path slowly and lost in thought. He had to cross the Nicer, but to do this he carefully looked out for a place, at which the wood neared the water's edge, thereby to better avoid the eyes of the Romans. It was not necessary for them to know the direction he had taken. Having reached the bank he rested a while to cool himself off. Then he carefully, with his battle-axe stuck in his girtle, strode forward into the shallow stream, till he lost the ground from under his feet,



he then divided the green waters with his mighty strokes. It seemed to him as if a battle-cry came sweeping over the water, he heard a splash behind him as if some one were swimming in pursuit of him. Just then his foot touched the ground, he looked back and saw a boat laden with soldiers making for him. Near him appeared the head of a huge dog, behind which swam a second. The white fangs gleamed near him, but the dog was given no time to use its grinning teeth. With one hand the powerful warrior grasped the branch of a willow, in the other he held his axe. The Roman soldiers shouted baiting, "Sphinx, hold him, bite, hold him, Phylax." But the head of the grim Sphinx disappeared all at once bathed in blood under the water. Phylax then thought it better to turn about, and in spite of the shouts of the soldiers, the dog swam back to the other banks, treading the water so powerfully, that it flew high up. "We must have the dog," cried some, "no, forwards," urged the others. Rowed backwards and forwards, the boat spun like a top. "The Christian must as a matter of course always command," cried out the stroke oar. "It is but necessary to go out hunting with you, for the game to escape."

was the retort. Whilst they thus disputed, Macrianus had reached in mighty bounds the edge of the wood, and disappeared in the thicket. Suddenly a heavy javelin fell so close at his feet, that the stones were scattered to the right and left. He saw peering through the bushes the hateful red-beard, which had already twice portended evil to him. Angrily did he pick up the spear and aim at his foe. The latter disappeared; but the return volley proved to him that many were there. He therefore swung to one side. Below him however came up the call: "seek, Phylax, hold on." An escape was not to be thought of. Mad with rage the king pressed on forwards for a time. He noticed whilst running the trail of a deer, which he followed so as to puzzle the dog. It led him back to the plain, which he had just left. He then caught hold of an oak and climbed from branch to branch like a squirrel. When he had reached the top, he swung himself unto a fir, thence to a second, and even a third, in order to throw off the dog. All was still immediately around him. But he heard the red-beard telling off his men two by two along the slope. More and more of his enemies crossed the Nicer. Soon he

distinguished sounds under him. The dog had found his trail, and followed it baying. Where it joined that of the stag, the dog became uncertain, and ran up and down barking. For a moment he stood sniffing at the tree, but the soldiers urged him on. "Let the dog find for himself, damned pagans," was shouted from below. Again the soldiers tracked hotly up and down. Then the dog followed lustily the trail of the stag, and the sound rang in the distance. But all was of no use, the guard remained and again and again small parties of pursuers approached Macrian's shelter. "He must be here perhaps in some hollow tree," he heard the red-beard say. "His traces end here."

"It is not in vain that Freya bestowed upon thee such a nose, thou Roman blood-hound," thought the king as he grasped his axe more firmly. Nothing was left for him but to wait for the evening thus hidden and then force his way through. The Notarius, however, left in order to bring up more men to aid in searching the wood. The king then swung himself from tree to tree and then noiselessly slid down and made his way carefully through the bushes. A path paved with stones leading

up to the watch-tower crossed his road. "It is perhaps better," he thought, "to press forward quite openly," as drawn up to his full height he strode up not too hastily the paved way towards the tower. Whoever might see him at a distance would take him to be a messenger bringing news to the sentries above. Coming to a place overshadowed by firs he dipped into the thicket and finally tired out he sought rest and shelter among the branches of a wide spreading oak. But the woods seemed as if they never would be still, the sun went under, the trees glinted in the evening glow. Then twilight and darkness. But the soldiers thought not of returning. The king, almost losing courage, noticed how the men under him redoubled their watch. Only above him around the tower was all quiet. Suddenly a hunting trick, which perhaps might answer shot through his head. An expression of merry cunning enlivened once again his wearied features. "I will clear the woods with their own signals," he thought. Lightly did he glide down from the tree, and softly stole towards the tower.

The Roman watch-tower on Mons Valentiniani, the highest hill on the left bank of the Nicer,

was like all towers of the kind a narrow square building, surrounded by palissades, and surmounted by a gallery on which the sentry marched his beat. The doors let in above could only be reached by a ladder which the guards drew up after them so as to avoid any surprise. The inner space was narrow, for a sentry was ever on watch, whilst his companion rested in the guard-room, in which was sleeping accommodation for only one man. In surly silence sat Salvius and Lupicinus in the gallery, and mounted guard leaning on the pilum, the one looking towards the south, the other towards the north for a trace of the fugitive, whose escape was reported to them soon after their arrival. Nevertheless the matter troubled them not much, as the pursuit was limited to the northern slope of the hill. Thus did the two sentries stand the whole afternoon. Thickly massed clouds passed over the solitary broad woodland peaks like silver swans. The sun went under and its lurid reflections still illuminated the sky; then twilight cast its veil around the lofty oaks, and one peak after the other disappeared in the mist which arose from out the river. Dreamily did the birds flutter here and there in the bushes, the

nightingale began its sobbing song, the wild dove cooed from far, and late as it was one heard the tapping of the woodpecker against the pine bark. All this, however, affected but little the two enraged companions. These were to them but the usual sounds of the woods. But their interest was suddenly aroused, by hearing the varied clucks of an enamoured capercailzie. Ever clearer and more enticing sounded the huge bird's töd öd öd öd clack from a near bush. "A cock," said Lupicinus with the interest felt by a German in this rare bird. It was the first word that he had deigned to address to his companion. But Salvius remained silent. "One can seize them when they cluck."

"Do what is pleasing to thee," rejoined Salvius shortly.

"The bird will taste as good to him as to me," thought the good-natured fair-headed man. "We shall get reconciled over the roast." He quickly disappeared down the staircase, placed his spear in the corner of the room, took a bow and arrows in its stead, then dropped the ladder out and climbed lightly down. His companion heard moreover how he drew the beam from the

gate of the court which he left open behind him. "An Arian's idea of duty," said Salvius mockingly. "First they deny the Lord, then forsake their duties and all for a bird." In any case he would not eat thereof, know nothing of the affair, and therefore he moved to the other side of the wooden gallery. Nevertheless even then the sound of a spring, of a fall, and of a muffled cry reached him. The hunt has not succeeded, he thought mockingly. After a while he heard the closing of the gate of the palissaded court, some one climbed up the ladder, which was then pulled up and placed on one side. It sounded as if Lupicinus had not his hands free. So after all he had killed his bird. Salvius nevertheless stirred not from his place, he would show the Arian what he thought of his conduct. But the ponderous tread of the incomer annoyed him, and turning angrily round, he gazed at the horrible countenance of a stranger. Thus did Cain appear after slaying Abel. Bloodshot eyes glared at him, he can yet see an arm raised to strike, then the axe already red with blood falls full on Salvius' head, the Roman sank to the ground without a sound. "Die, dog of a Roman," cried the king, intoxicated with blood.

The veins in his forehead are swollen and murder is in his eyes. All the objects around him appear red, red the mountain, red the evening sky, and he pours down wild blows on his victim, till the spirit of murder in him is appeased. He then seizes the sentry's pilum and leaning on the spear watches the death agonies of the young soldier. When certain to be no longer disturbed, he carefully goes about a mysterious work. He fetches a pitch pan, heaps therein dried wood. Steel and flint are at hand. In a few minutes a red flame shoots up to heaven. Macrian gazes fixedly towards the north. Terrified by the unaccustomed light the birds twitter, the beasts of the forest become restless, bats and insects fly blinded into the destroying element. The German gazes uninterruptedly towards the north. After a while a distinct flame from the top of Mons Piri returns answer and behind that sparkles a second light in the distance and the beacons flame up as far as Melibocus; as he turns to the south there likewise the red signals meet his eye, and now the trumpet calls sound out in the camp below summoning the troops back and finding a startling echo in the woods. Everywhere is movement.



The scattered sentries posted in different positions run as fast as their legs can carry them down to the river. A panic seizes them and each thinks the companion chasing after him to be an Alemann in pursuit. Many tumble over the roots of pine trees and pitifully beg one another for quarter. "Now is the time," said Macrianus mockingly, "the lions have become hares and the road is cleared." Hanging out his ladder he descended down with a firm step. Then he took it also down and dragged it after him. As he passed by the fair-headed youth, who lay lifeless on the ground, a tenderer feeling came over the hardened warrior. "Foolish boy," he said half-loud, "why didst thou wish to chase the cock when posted on duty. Hadst thou served in Macrian's army thou wouldst not have fallen in the snare. . . . Shall I destroy the ladder? But who knows whether I must not turn back again," and he took it along with him for some distance finally hiding it in a thick bush. Below in the valley the king saw red lights moving hither and thither. Signals were made and answered. His path however led through the woods and soon the warrior strode through solitary bits, where his path alone crossed the track of wolves, and

but the shriek of the night owl broke the stillness of the night. Full and big rose the moon and lighted the tangled path for the bold soldier. When the confusion by the Nicer was stilled, king Macrian had long escaped into the territories of the Alemanni. By morning he entered a court, when Hortari and his men received him with the joyous stroke of the sword on the edge of the shield and loud cries of "Heilo! Sigo!"

At the very hour that the Alemanian king quitted the watch-tower on Mons Valentiniani, Rothari with rage and jealousy in his heart had taken leave of the young Augustus, and was about to return to his room. But the light of torches from the vestibulum surprised him. Jetta, accompanied by a slave and the old Phorkyas, came up to him. The slender figure with its pale, intelligent features, contrasted with the one-eyed witch formed a curious picture, lighted up by the red torch, whose glare designed the moving shadows on the white wall of the entry-way. "Pardon, noble guest, if I disturb thee," said Jetta, and once again the full metallic sound of her voice stirred Rothari to the heart's core. "My father sent in a message, which affects thee in the highest degree. For the

last half-hour, so does he report from the camp, lights flame from all the signal towers. Soldiers rush in wild flight partly over the bridge, partly through the Porta prætoria. No one knows anything for certain, yet Syagrius fears an attack of the Alemanni. All the troops have returned into camp. My father leaves me the choice of either flying to him within the prætorium, or placing myself under thy protection, so that in case of need thou accompaniest me to Alta Ripa. Thou, thus says he, wouldst best know how to protect me from injury at the hands of the barbarians." And blushing did she look on him, whilst a lovely smile beautified her face.

Rothari's heart beat tumultuously. "And how hast thou decided, noble maiden?" he asked.

"I?" as she gave a clear laugh. "I would prefer above all things seeing the signals burning. I have long thought how beautiful it must seem when the flames gleam on the mountains around!" And her laugh sounded clear and full of contempt as if no danger affected her. "Let us ride out in the plain," she said beseechingly, "and enjoy this wondrous sight."

"Then I begin my roll of Mentor with a

foolish act," answered Rothari, "but even the wise Jason had to do what Medea ordered."

"The signal on Mons Valentiniani has been extinguished," now reported a slave.

"Oh dear," said Jetta sadly, "again we come too late."

"It was a false alarm, I thought so at once," said Rothari. "Such always take place, when a man of books, like Syagrius, plays at generalship. In any case let my men hold the horses in readiness."

"And do thou saddle my mule," added Jetta turning to the slave. "We require no lights, the moon will soon be up." When the torchbearer had retired, Jetta said with a graceful movement towards the German, "If it be pleasing to thee, let us await my father in the garden. May-nights are clear and mild and I love the trickling of the fountain." Whether this was pleasing to the young soldier? His pulse beat high. As she threw herself so proudly negligent in an arm-chair near a marble fountain, in which already the first ray of the rising moon trembled, she resembled the portrait of the beautiful woman, who gave Colonia Agrippina its name.

"Art thou not afraid, noble maiden," said Rothari modestly, as he sat down in a chair near Jetta, "to live so close to the enemy's confines? You can never here lie down and feel certain not to be awakened by a war-cry, and be the next morning carried off to the mountains as prisoners."

"What does fear avail me," said she merrily. "We women are here, to keep the soldiers in good spirits, otherwise we shall be expelled from the neighbourhood of the camp. The worse things look, the more cheerful must I appear, then even the weak despise their own cowardice. I encourage the men with my jests." Again did Rothari think of Agrippina who knew in such camp life how like a general to inspire the soldiers, and equally with her husband conquered Germany for the Empire. The beauteous maiden continued quietly, "I wish to especially prove to the soldiers that we are not here as guests, but that we intend to remain here. Therefore have I even spent a second winter here, that our people may know: that even to the mountains is Rome. Since the erection of the Flavian altars the land of the Decumates belonged to the Empire of Augustus, and shall full two centuries of Rome's greatness be wiped out through

our disgrace? Of all Martial's epigrams I can only endure one, which he wrote at that time. It is to me rather a prayer, as claiming for us the entire Rhenus and not only one bank:

Rhine, father of the Nymphs and streams,  
Who drinkest the northern snows and mists,  
May thy waters flow ever free from ice,  
That no oxendriver traverse thee  
With his barbaric wheel.  
Mayest thou as a God receive the golden horns  
And own the Roman sway on both thy banks,  
Obedient to Augustus and to the Sovereign Tiberius.

*"Romanus utraque ripa!* That is my watch-word," she cried, and there was something of the beauteous frenzy of the Pythia in her eye as she spake. Rothari drank in her being with all his senses. Her deep black-blue prophetic eyes widely opened gazed on him, and when she spake, the sound resembled the deep resonance of a gong from Dodona, so that he ever again started in amazement.

"For this also," continued she, "do I consider Valentinianus a great man. People call him coarse and cruel, nevertheless, be he what he may, he is the first who since Probus and Julian conceives plans worthy of ancient Rome. Instead of always

defending, he begins again to conquer. He is a Roman, even if he appears at times himself to be a barbarian."

Rothari joined her in her praise of the emperor. He related his own experiences with Augustus, his savage adventure with Mica, and the touching manner in which the Emperor atoned for his wanton impetuosity. Devoutly and with ever increasing sympathy Jetta listened to him. The finely chiselled cameo-head bent forward ever closer and closer in the excitement of his narration, the gold fillet that confined her hair gleamed in the moonlight, she resembled a queen, or in this bewitching hour of night a Circe. The full white arms spanned her knees, the woollen drapery rose and fell gently on her breast, bound by the golden girdle, the more that his recital stirred her very heart, and ever closer came her face nearing his own so that he became confused and hesitated. Their own proximity affected intoxicatingly these young and beauteous children, together with the vague movement and life of a spring-night. Glow-worms sparkled in the bushes, and where one settled, he lighted around a small world of tops and buds of plants, of shimmering leaves and

white blossoms. The evening wind laden with the heavy odour of jasmin and honeysuckle blew entrancingly around the head of the young warrior, and a love of life such as he had never before felt, ran through him, he had to restrain himself, to prevent himself from drawing the beauteous maiden to him, but he overcame the temptation.

"Let us suppose the case," said he seriously, "that he succeeded in retaining these conquests of the last years, wouldest thou really remain here on the boundaries of the empire, and not return to the metropolis?"

"I have sworn to remain till . . ." here she hesitated.

"Till," he repeated and fixed his kindly blue eyes on her.

"It will hurt thy feeling, for thou art a German, and a king's son as is said. I was however but still a silly child as I once said to Valentinian, for which they still laugh at me to-day, that the camp would not be rid of me, till I had seen nine kings of the Alemanni kneeling before him and praying for peace, as once they had done before Probus."



"At thy feet," said the young man smiling, "wilt thou see them sooner than at Valentinian's. But I rejoice, that we shall be fellow soldiers for so long a time, as I also remain here."

"I know it and rejoice thereat. Thou wilt not come and go like so many of thy tribe. Thou hast also remained true to the old Gods—that was the first thing which gained my confidence," she blushed at the word which had escaped her against her will.

"How didst thou know that?" asked he modestly.

"I heard it amidst the hundred news which the young Augustus poured down upon me to-day."

"And how did Gratian please thee?"

"From an excitable child will arise, if the Gods guide him, a capable man. Idleness would be at his age an evil."

That sounded very wise and motherly. Rothari was so much touched that he began to praise Gratian.

"He also spoke of thee," she said after a while, "but his praise sounded warmer." The small Venus-shells of the Medea had an acute sense of hearing. Rothari felt the reproof and remained silent.

Jetta also spoke not. After a time he said, "One question to thine art. To-day I did a risky deed. Will it destroy me?"

"At what hour was it?"

"Two hours before midday."

"And how old art thou?"

"Twenty-six years and three days."

"I must also know the names of thy parents."

Rothari hesitated. "Wilt thou disturb their rest?" he asked thoughtfully, "they are in Asaheim, as I hope."

"They shall quietly repose in your hall of Gods, and that thou mayest see," she said smiling, "that I trust thee, I will tell thee exactly what I do."

"And I trust thee," he answered, "they were named Vadomar and Brechta."

"Good. Seek the answer to-morrow before sunrise under this stone."

"And art thou not vexed, that thy guest even in the first hour requires such service of thee?"

"Thou hast the good line between the brows," she said with her sweet smile. "Whoever has that, to him I never deny the first request."

Rothari was silent. Had he known that, he would have asked for something else. Now he

felt sorry, and considered whether a second request was available owing to the good line. But before he could make up his sentence, the sound of horses' hoofs struck his ear. "My father!" cried Jetta joyously. The Comes galloped up. Quickly sprang he from his horse and threw the bridle to his slaves. Hastily greeting Jetta, he seized Rothari by the arm, and drew him further into the garden. "What we did together this morning was indeed foolish," he said in a low voice. "Valentinian appeared quite unexpectedly to-day in Alta Ripa. Macrian terrified through his boldness the whole camp. The sentries on the tower let themselves be surprised. Salvius lies dead, Lupicinus has not yet been found. The whole of the troops along the valley are on the alert, and Augustus himself will be here to-morrow."

"I take everything on myself," said Rothari calmly. "He confided the negotiations with Macrian to me, I have conducted them as I thought best for Rome. If my conduct of the affair does not please him, he can punish me."

"I thank thee, Rothari, thou art a friend in need."

"Thou wilt ever find me a friend of my friends." They returned to the house together

where Jetta awaited them. She had modestly drawn back, but her woman's ear had already heard from her father's tone, that the German could be of much use to him. As if to an old friend did she stretch out her hand previous to going up to her own rooms. Soon afterwards Rothari discovered that he was sitting in his room surrounded by the old armour of king Vadomar. How it came there he knew not. She was in truth a sorceress. The blood hammered in his temples, and it was a long time before the God of dreams calmed his excited thoughts.

## CHAPTER VI.

EARLY in the following morning sounds were heard in Arator's villa. Lupicinus who had at last been found in the wood by soldiers passing by the tower was brought in on a bier. The young warrior was fully conscious. The blow given by the Alemannian king had rather stunned than severely wounded him, although ugly lumps of clotted blood stuck in his fair hair. He had already made a straightforward confession to Arator, and had been carried back to the villa

to be nursed. Rothari heard from his bedroom Jetta's deep soothing voice as she attended to the wounded man, as well as the husky whispers of her old nurse. Quickly did he spring up, and through an opening in the curtain listened with delight how Jetta addressed the wounded soldier in the kindest manner. Whilst the aged Phorkyas washed and bound up his wounds, the beauteous maiden knelt by the bier, held the hand of the warrior quivering with pain, and comforted him so sweetly that in spite of all his sufferings he endeavoured to smile. His fear at the terrible punishment which awaited him, she knew how to smilingly dispel. She would herself speak to Arator and if needs be to Augustus himself, not a hair of his head should be touched. Should he, however, be sent to dig in the trenches of Alta Ripa as a punishment, she would daily visit him. When Phorkyas had finished bandaging the wounded man he was carried to his dwelling, to which the women followed him. Rothari had now seen with his own eyes why the whole camp worshipped Arator's lovely daughter, and why every individual man as had been told him would have gone through the fire for Jetta's sake.

Pining to meet again this wondrous being the German sought the garden to await her. The May sun gleamed smiling over the woods, in which the animals there concealed had been disturbed on the previous night by the call of the trumpet and the glare of the torch. Countless larks arose from the plain, and lost in the blue sky made their thrilling note be heard in the same language which for thousands of years before had been known to their species, and would be for thousands of years to come, while man with his love of change speaks every century in newer sounds. Under the stone marked out by Jetta, Rothari found a small circular sheet; he read it, smiled, and pressed it to his lips. But for the dear sorceress herself he waited in vain.

He was at last obliged to hurry off in order to greet the Emperor together with the other leaders. Refreshed by the balmy morning air and joyously excited by the sea of light, which streamed down on him from heaven, he rode forward free from care to meet the judge to whom he should account for his conduct of the previous day. The camp had been pitched some hundred yards below the egress of the valley, so as not to be over-

topped by the mountains, and formed a long square. A wide double trench surrounded the walls and battlements protected by an earthwork, from which here and there gleamed the helmet of a sentry, or the point of some pilum. The red vexilla fluttered in the morning wind, and the regimental badge of the cohort, a golden bull, shone brilliantly on the top of the gate. Passing the *porta principalis*, Rothari found himself in the soldiers' quarters, and rode along the huts, roofed with grass or turf. Inside these huts the benches used for sleeping were ranged around, and in the middle was the hearth, surrounded by massive stoneblocks. Riding down the road, the German came to the Prætorium. A large bit of ground covered in, annexed to the handsome building, served as drill-room. Inside the weapons clashed and one might hear the javelins and the short leaden-weighted arrows striking against the targets. Rothari was informed by the *centurion* in command, that the higher officers were assembling near the outworks on the other side of the bridge, so as to ride out and meet the Augustus at Alta Ripa. Whilst he was being instructed by his subaltern as to the cross-roads, the eye of the German contemplated with delight the entrancing

landscape which surrounded the camp. To the back and front one saw the bridge and the villages around Mons Piri, to the right and left the blue valley of the Nicer, and then the green plain outside, which through the opening of the handsomely carved red sand-stone gate looked very inviting.

Leaving the western portion of the camp, the retentura, with its magazines to one side, Rothar rode past the slaughter-house, the well, and other commissariat buildings to the bridge, in the midst of which, near the Neptune altar, his German men-at-arms awaited their commander, and thus accompanied the king's son rode to the outworks where the other officers had assembled. Gratian galloped forwards and held out a hand to his friend. Arator and Syagrius joined the group, and then the entire body rode along the road to Alta Ripa, to meet the Augustus. Of the inhabitants of the two villages Vicus Novus on the right and the Pagus of the Nemetes on the left bank of the Nicer, none had that day remained at home. They waited in scattered groups around the gate of the out-work through which the Augustus must first pass. The sun rose and scorched with its burning rays the flowering shrubs and springing seed. The sentries



at the west gate of the camp kept a sharp watch in the direction of the Rhenus. At last, dust rose in the main-road. A numerous cavalcade came up at an easy pace. Rothari's Germans together with a troop of mounted barbarians under the command of Balchobaudes, tribune of the guard, rode far in advance. Then came the two Augusti, father and son, and behind them at a respectful distance Arator, Rothari and the squat Syagrius, who had a most ungainly seat on horseback. A more considerable squadron of armed cavalry in shining scale armour formed up the rear. "Hail to the Augustus, hail," cried the villagers as the mounted men approached the outworks, "hail to the father and the son." But scarcely was the greeting heard, when out of the crowd sounded a clear voice: "Glory to the consubstantial God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, not to men." All looked around in horror, Valentinian alone pretending not to have heard anything rode calmly on. Rothari's sharp eyes spied out the bold disturber. He saw a pale youth, who with his shock of fair hair stood out prominently from among the gaily dressed crowd. His ragged cloak disclosed the cynic or anchorite, but Rothari felt sure he knew

the young man. "Who art thou, who insultest the Augustus?" he called out riding his horse at him and raising his axe, so as to scatter the spectators to the right and left. But the youth approached all the closer and said, "Vulfilaich, son of Vadomar, thy brother."

An ugly wrinkle furrowed Rothari's brow, but he lowered his axe, turned his horse round and galloped after the others. Quickly did he whisper a few words in Gratian's ear and then rode back to Vulfilaich. The crowd had hurried after the gaudy pageant, none stood there but the young monk who gazed sadly before him. "He has raised his battle-axe against me," said he to himself, "now are we like Cain and Abel." But Rothari already stood near him and laid his hand on his shoulder. "Boy, boy, what dost thou look like, thou son of my father? Hast thou indeed become a cynic, philosopher, or monk?"

"I am come, Rothari," said the youth, "to bring thee back thine own, thou wilt have found it, to pray thee to forgive me my sins, and to lead thee to Him, who forgives the sins of us all."

"Three things at once, which would take long to treat," said Rothari smiling. "I must however

be back for the review. Wait for me below in the gravel-pit, there we shall be undisturbed. So soon as I can get away, I will seek thee." And he again tenderly stroked the shock head of his tattered brother, waved a salute and galloped towards the bridge.

Several hours elapsed before that the veteran Commander had ridden through the camp and inspected with experienced eye all stores with arrows, leaden bolts, and other missiles and weapons. Finally he entered together with Gratian and the higher officers, into the prætorium whose entrance was guarded by a centurion and two sentries. Valentinian first heard in the lofty vestibulum the proposals of Syagrius as to the construction of the castellum, which was to be built on the hill. Even if the brilliant staff of superior officers had not surrounded the Augustus with so much respect, he would have immediately been recognized by any stranger as the sovereign, so much did the majestic appearance of the powerful imperial form command respect. There stood the giant, who by the mere lowering of his brows had instilled order into mutinous legions. His bearing was stiff, the glance of his squinting eye piercing,

and none into whose eye he looked could support its gaze. However much the emperor restrained himself, nevertheless his whole appearance gave the impression of a ferocity restrained with difficulty, and his presence lay like something terrible even over the most courageous, for all remembered the tortures and horrid forms of death, to which he had condemned others. He had come to inquire into the causes of the alarm of the previous day, which had spread like wild fire even into Gaul, the news of a fresh attack by the Alemanni, and it was feared that he would decree to the guilty man one of his terrible punishments. But the praise ever accorded to Valentinian that he knew when on duty how to restrain himself, proved itself true also on that day. If pressing duties, troubles, dangers rendered other tyrants of his kind more excitable, an exigency called forth discipline in that breast racked by passions. Had he, however, to decide some state affair of importance, his violence changed at once into an entire clearness of mind, into an almost peaceful calm and mildness, for he was ever anxious about the welfare of the empire and of justice. Whilst his private life was stained by excesses that recalled

Nero and Caracalla to mind, his official acts bore without exception the impress of temperate energy and calm foresight. Had he not been so immoderate in his punishments, the passionate irritability of his disposition would have been forgotten through the ordered calm of his government. For this cause the circle of high generals stood round in fear of the dark looks of the Augustus as he made inquiries as to the events of the previous day. All looked anxiously at Arator and Rothari, whilst Syagrius declaimed his charge against both with cutting coldness, sharpening each word as with a knife.

"Who was the Alemann whom thou didst aid to escape, Rothari?" asked the Emperor in a hoarse voice, when Syagrius had finished.

"The Alemann was king Macrian," answered Rothari indifferently.

The brilliant crowd of Roman officers started at this answer with one movement so that the clashing of their armour was heard. A smothered cry of horror rang through the hall. Valentinian alone maintained his composure, and fastening his squinting gaze on Rothari he asked coldly, "What determined thee to suffer Rome's worst enemy to escape from thy power?"

"Had I known," rejoined Rothari, "that thou wouldst be here to-day, I would have persuaded Macrian to beg a peaceful audience of thee." A wicked look passed over the sinister face of the Emperor and his gaze became more searching. "But thou lovest surprises," added Rothari boldly, "because thou trustest none of us. When on the Mosella I told thee, that thy suspicions lose the empire half thy victories. Even now thou art in thine own mind thoroughly convinced," continued the German with slight irony, "that I have dealt as Alemann with Alemann against thee. What would have been the consequence, if following the advice of thy wise Notarius, we had kept Macrianus prisoner? The Alemanni would have already stormed these weak walls. Thou wouldst have had a war, which thou certainly dost not now wish, as none of thy new plans are yet completed."

"But we should have had an hostage," broke in Syagrius.

"Dost thou teach me to know the Alemanni, scribe of Byzantium," rejoined Rothari scoffingly. "The king would rather have dashed his brains out against his prison wall, than suffered that through his capture an injury should arise to his

tribe. New kings spring forth in an hour among the Alemanni, and my people would have raised no man on the shield, who had been by one hair less worthy than Macrian."

"May be," answered Augustus shortly, "but thou tookest upon thee a decision, which properly belonged to me."

"‘Act in my place, as myself,’ didst thou write to me in thy last credentials. How was I to know that thou didst not require a proxy, being thyself on the spot? I am playing a dangerous game, thought I to myself, but Valentinian is magnanimous, he will understand why I did what I do. Under Julian I should have been more careful; for he played the Great, but thought small. Have I judged wrongly, then take back thine authority. I can only excecute it, if thou trustest me."

"And what didst thou treat with Macrian?"

"He supposed that we wished to build here, and threatened to attack in case we fortify in spite of treaties. For the present however he is evidently not prepared for war."

"Dost thou think thyself capable to lure the barbarian again into my hands, when we are ready for battle?" asked the king.

"No," replied Rothari haughtily as a deep flush tinged his aristocratic young face. "I sold my sword to Rome, not my conscience. I will not have you murder him as you did Vithikab."

The Emperor bit his lips. But Arator joined in at the right moment. He also maintained, that Rothari's procedure was considering the present condition of the empire most prudent. In his opinion the arrest of the king would have been succeeded by an immediate declaration of war, and this would have pleased the Augustus less than any one.

As Valentinian cast a look around him, to see how the other generals judged the affair, he noticed, how his delicate son had thrown his arm round Rothari's neck and was patting his cheek. A look of kindness shot from out his evil eye. But his expression became once more hard and cold, as he said, "All of you follow me to Alta Ripa."

"Which Rothari will not leave alive," this remark seemed to play around Syagrius' curled ironical lips. But the emperor had already reached the door, and the suite pressed behind him. All kept away from Rothari, Gratian alone approached.



him. "Tell me, brother, how couldst thou have the courage? My knees shook with fear and anxiety."

Rothari pulled a parchment leaf from his belt, and Gratian read: "Fear not, thy star is in the ascendant." The tall boy looked gapingly at Rothari.

"From thy Medea," said Rothari jestingly.

"What dost thou poach in my preserves?" answered the youth angrily.

"I am keeping her for thee till thy beard grows," said Rothari, smilingly stroking his hair. They reached the gate. The troops mounted their horses at once, and the entire cavalcade galloped off towards Alta Ripa.

## CHAPTER VII.

Whilst this stormy scene was taking place in the camp, Rothari's brother sat in the sand-pit below the bridge and gazed thoughtfully at the rapidly flowing waters of the green Nicer. The river cast its foam on the reeds in the bank, whence it hung slimily down. Long-legged water-flies made wider and wider circles in the puddles on the banks; here and there a frog who had

noticed in time the heron circling in the skies splashed into the water. Otherwise the most profound silence reigned in the pit, which the river had scooped out in the high bank, and whose entrance it guarded from the front. The time did not seem long to the monk accustomed to solitary pensiveness. Kneeling with his head resting on the grass, he passed in review images of his inner world, and did not feel alone in his isolation. Then he prayed in a loud voice, and finally pacing up and down the strand he refreshed his memory by the repetition of all the psalms and texts which his teacher Benedictus had taught him. When tired he sat down on the bank and ranged white and black stones, to represent the monogram of Christ, in the shape of the ark of the good Shepherd, of the fish, and all the insignia, which he had seen in the churches of Mogontiacum and Borbetomagus. Finally the sand above him creaked. He heard Rothari dismount and fasten his horse to a tree. The rolling down of stones announced his approach. Pale with joyous excitement the youthful Alemann arose. All traces of any recent annoyance had disappeared from the warrior's face as he approached Vulfilaich. In silent agitation the brothers em-

braced and stood a while hand in hand. Then Vulfilaich said. "Hast thou, O my brother, fully and entirely forgiven my misdeeds?"

"I knew well," replied Rothari, "that the yellow gold could only dazzle thee for a moment, and that thou wouldst never retain, what was not thine. But what thou didst bring me, is only half mine. I refuse it."

"Keep it as an atonement," said the monk, "but promise me, that now thou wilt return to the halls of our ancestors."

Rothari shook his head sadly, the youth, however, continued. "Behold, Vithikab our brother is dead. Fraomar wanders as outlaw in a strange land. My garb hinders me from managing the inheritance of our fathers, but my heart grieved within me, as I lately visited all the scenes of our happy youth. The house is in ruins. The slaves pursue in Vadomar's wood the red deer and slay the stags. The flocks of the neighbours feed on our pastures. They carry away the large stones from the brook, so that the torrent washes away our land. Everything cries out for its Lord, but I have consecrated myself to a higher Lord, I dare not live there. That is the punishment. I thought

on seeing this destruction, for our injustice to Rothari our homestead must be left desolate. And I am guilty, why did I take, what was thine."

"No, my boy. The ruddy gold played no part in my departure, of that thou mayest be sure. The perfidy of the whole tribe drove me forth, not silver and brass. Now, however, I cannot return, sacred vows hold me back."

Vulflaich sighed. Had it been a matter of winning his brother over to a spiritual life, he would have continued the struggle. He was not willing to urge him concerning earthly matters, and he dared not counsel his brother to break an oath.

"Thou wilt not return home," said he gently, "but hast thou not yet found that other home, which my weary soul found, since thou hast been living so many years among the Christians?" And he pointed to the symbols which he had drawn on the beach. Rothari shook his head. "No, my boy," said he, looking sharply at his brother. "Thou wert more pleasing to me, when I saw thee in the splendour of weapons, with thine eyes clear, and thy cheeks blooming. These lines are not those which happiness and peace of mind are wont to mark."

"Oh, say not that!" cried Vulfilaich with gleaming eyes. "It is a sacred fire which consumes me."

At these words an ecstasy seemed to come over him, and he suddenly spoke in quite another tone. All weariness and depression fell away from him, and his voice raised itself to deep impassionedness. "The divine love sought me out," he cried, "it pierced through me. The good seed fell into my heart, and lighted a great desire within me. I must have saved myself from the turmoils of the world, for in me grow shoots which require but room to ripen out. Benedictus has opened mine eyes, so that I behold the hosts of heaven, and hell fighting for the possession of the earth, Thou passest through weather and combats and thinkest not, who causes them. Thou livest surrounded by sin and darkness, without believing in either. Thousands fall at thy right hand, and ten thousands at thy left from the pestilence which creeps through the world, and thou sayest, that must be so! So went I also forth in the joy at first of the beasts, in the sadness then of dæmons. Then I found my teacher and guide, the thrice blessed. He told me that there was a life for the

soul of entire love and purity, in which no unruly thirst after Lust, no fear of pain tortured us, namely the life, which the Son of God established on earth, whose peace I proclaim."

"I do not wish to hear about this peace," said Rothari in a tone of displeasure. "How much rather would I see thee on some fiery steed, be it in Macrian's army, or in that of Augustus, than in the dress which thou wearest, which befits no king's son."

"He whom I serve is a faithful king, who has saved me out of nine dangers, and will not let me perish in the tenth. He has also even now a greater and better army than all the kings of the earth."

"A better?" replied Rothari. "The best people whom I have known have indeed been Christians, but also the worst. I therefore do not argue against thy God. But I will not be without the Gods of my youth. I still see Donar riding on the clouds when the tempests gather, I still see the good woman with her veil sweep over the meadows when the evening falls. The deities speak to my ear in the rustling forest and murmuring stream. I will not curse them as devils male or

female, for they have done me no harm. My eye delights to see in your churches the waving banners and the white vestments, but I also look on with pleasure in the temples of the Romans, and in the Grotto of Mithras, who explains to me the great problem of existence."

"Lord of Lords, take away the bandage from his eyes, that he may see that they are devils whom he worships," stammered Vulfilaich in agony. "Think of the terrors of the judgment of Him, who now comes!"

"My friend, thus preached your priest when I was but a boy, and the world stands to-day as fast as ever. I fear but that on this hard earth much will have to occur, both good and bad, ere Fenrir's wolf swallows up sun and moon. I asked the philosophers in Greece and Rome, and they told me: the old struggle between night and day, frost and heat, water and fire, light and darkness, will continue in the world till it be destroyed, but no man will come on the clouds, to order its end before due time. Should he, however, come, I would not care to know of a city in the clouds, which you await, nor to pass through your gate of pearls. It may be pleasing to you to kneel

down up there and to play on a harp before a lamb, as thou hast drawn here; I however when I meet my death on the field of battle, or the not dishonoured straw-couch, shall mount the seven-coloured bow which leads upwards to Asgard, stride into the halls of the heroes, drink mead with them, hear them tell of their deeds, and relate to them, how I rushed through sword and spear, till Hel, who cowers beneath the green sod, pulled under my wound-covered body."

Sadly did Vulfilaich gaze as he seemed to tremble from inward excitement. Rothari, however, smote him kindly on the shoulder. "Let us leave the Higher and Lower deities, they will trouble themselves about us early enough, perhaps sooner than is agreeable to us. Let us think of the present, and now, my friend, it was not prudent of thee to send our spoils into the house of a Roman. Dost thou believe, that they will remember with pleasure, how we seven mounted men made the citizens of Decempagi pay contributions? It wanted but a little and thou hadst turned my host into a deadly enemy."

The young monk turned pale. He had not thought of that, but at the moment overlooked



the danger into which through his boasting he had brought his brother. "Moreover," continued Rothari, "thy enthusiasm has crossed my plans. Rando's hall is adorned by a gorgeous helmet which he won in the last battle at Solicinium. But yesterday I sent to our friend and relation a messenger, asking him to give it to me, and to demand from you my share of the treasures on the Taunus. If he sends the helmet and finds the treasure on the Taunus gone, he will think that I have deceived him."

"I acted foolishly," answered Vulfilaich sadly. "How shall I make amends?"

"Be not vexed with thyself," said Rothari kindly, "but let Rando know, how matters stand. Let him tell me of some safe place, if he be satisfied with the bargain, and thither will I send what is mine, and if thou wishest, also what is thine."

"I will go and do as thou sayest. But first I must go to Alta Ripa, and carry a message to Ithacius."

Rothari was about to inveigh against the Bishop, whom he hated, when he heard the sound of hoofs. The rider sprang off, and climbed down to the pit. It was Arator. "So here thou art

hidden with this night-owl," he cried angrily. "Art thou really betraying us, or dost thou insist on losing thy neck? Valentinian never lost sight of thee for a moment, and wishes to know with whom thou makest here these secret appointments."

"I am a free man and the son of a king, I shall act as is pleasing to me. This man here, however, whom thou insultest is the monk whom we so eagerly sought. He is Vadomar's son and my brother." He then turned slowly to his horse. Arator inspected with angry look the tattered garb of the Alemannian prince. Then he said harshly: "Thy brother may thank thee, if thou bringest him to his destruction. Thou carriest into the camp of Augustus the booty which he made in the land of Augustus. Thou relatest before the servants, soldiers, and Notarius of the Emperor, where he acquired it. Hadst thou excused thy countryman Lupicinus his difference of faith, instead of enraging him, he would not the following day have picked a quarrel on Mons Piri, and would not be lying to-day in the camp with a broken head. Entice thy brother again to such secret meetings and thou mayest carry his urn to the columbarium near Rosenhofe."

The young monk stood transfixed and pale, while the raging Comes turned his back on him. He could make no reply, for Arator threw himself on his horse, and forced Rothari, through the quick trot into which he broke, to take but a hasty farewell. Motionless stood Vulfilaich for some time. Then a shudder ran through his body, his limbs were racked hither and thither as by some secret power, he felt again that the hour of his temptation was come, and humbly he knelt down in the soft sand. Then he fainted away.

Silence and stillness reigned at the spot where Vulfilaich lay. The waves flowed restlessly past the senseless youth. At times an Alemann rowed past in the hollowed bark of a tree and looked with indifference at the apparently sleeping figure on the bank. Rafts with building material shot by, but the shouts of the slaves woke him not.

The sun sank and the crickets began to vie with the frogs as for a wager in praising the mildness of the evening air. A lovely female form had also been enticed out by the refreshing coolness. She went up and down the bank singing, gathering flowers and grasses to make a bouquet, which she looked at with childish joy.

"The blending of the colours of this face copy not artists,  
Copy not, ye mortal limners,  
Mix, o painter, with the glory of the lily, the fragrant rose,  
And then with the breath of the flowers, paint thou Bissula."

Thus sang she with a joyous smile, and the verses could well have referred to her, for under her wealth of fair hair beamed a face, such as praised Ausonius' song, and clear blue eyes. Happily did she look about her for fresh flowers when suddenly a cry of horror escaped her lips. She had seen Vulfilaich and her sharp eye noticed at once the unnatural stiffness of the body lying in the sand. "The poor young man," she sighed; "the soldiers have certainly killed him also, and he has fair hair and is one of my people." Filled with pity did she hasten along the sand to see if she could yet help the poor creature. Finding no trace of any wound she laid aside her flowers, and scooping up water with both her hands she poured it over his forehead. Then the pale monk opened his eyes slowly and stared her in the face. Bissula, for she it was, the German wife of Ausonius, continued her role of Samaritan. She raised his head and rubbed his temples till life returned to him.

But the young monk did not seem grateful to her for the trouble she took. He struggled and seemed to wish to say something, but his tongue refused its office. "Dost thou wish to die?" said Bissula pityingly, "that my help seems so displeasing to thee? Poor boy, what did they do to hurt you?" and she laid his head on her breast in a motherly manner.

The monk then collected himself. "I must not be alone with any woman," were the first words which he painfully uttered. Bissula burst out laughing. "Thou art indeed a monk. Thou silly boy, when thou camest into the world wert thou not alone with thy mother? Pardon me if I break through thy rules. Should I have left thee to die?"

Vulfilaich was silent. "Where shall I take thee to, thou pious man? I cannot leave thee here alone, even thy holiness must see that."

"I wish to go to Bishop Ithacius."

The pretty woman tossed her fair hair, and said mockingly, "Indeed, but thou canst not walk so far as Alta Ripa," and her clear eyes looked up the river. "Here comes a boat through the bridge." And with a sonorous voice she called to the fisherman to stop. The big weather-beaten German

rowed his rough-made boat towards them. "Here is a sick man who wishes to go to Alta Ripa; canst thou take him?" asked Bissula in the German tongue. "Can he pay?" answered the man, casting a mistrustful look at Vulfilaich's coarse garments. Bissula unfastened a bracelet from her beauteous plump arm. "I give this to thee as pledge. Bring it to me on thy return to the Zehnthof, and ask for Ausonius' wife, she will redeem it."

"I believe thee without a pledge," answered the German kindly, "keep the thing, I might lose it, or pawn it were I thirsty. It is safer thus." And he helped the sick man into his boat and laid him tenderly down in the bows. "Take me also along," said Bissula, "and set me down on the other side, so that I do not need to go through the camp, where the soldiers stare at me." With a light spring she sat in the boat, and began arranging the flowers she had plucked. Once on the other side she nodded in a friendly way to the fisherman and lightly climbed up the steep bank, from which she looked after the boat for some time. "He did not even thank me once, the young bear," she said smiling. "I must relate

this to Ausonius, he is always amused by such stories about our new brethren." And with the happy smile of a child she hastened towards a large farm, which lay in a dip of the plain, on the other side of the road.

## CHAPTER VIII.

A little town laid out in the Roman manner was in itself a small confiding world, with its houses devoid of windows on the side facing the road, and its small streets, the broadest of which were only wide enough for two carts to pass each other, the narrowest so cramped, that the arms of a grown-up man could touch either wall. The windows and turrets of the houses, with the exception of one door, faced inwards, and one could live comfortably enough in the uncovered courts and roofed-in halls. The forum was in the middle of the town, in which between the Curia and the Basilica stood or rode the statue in brass or marble of some celebrated man. Here in Alta Ripa this was about to be represented by a high column of victory, which was being chiselled out in the

syenite quarries of Melibocus, as the war had for a time interrupted the work. The emperor had handed over the Basilica to the orthodox worshippers, whilst an Arian bishop resided in the neighbouring Lupodunum. The handsomest edifice was the bastion, which also served the purpose of an imperial castle. The mighty stone building with its well grouped, round windows and dazzling leaden roof, was a feature in the stone fortress, which defiantly turned its pinnacles towards the Alemannian mountains. Representing both palatium and propugnaculum, this stronghold consisted of two four-storied towers, projecting above the city wall from the outer side in a semi-circle. The space between the two towers was filled up by a middle building, which contained on the ground floor a gate, in the two upper stories the gangways, halls, and rooms which connected the towers. Did the enemy break through the gate, he found himself within an enclosed court, in which missiles of all kinds rained down on him from the galleries above, and before that he could become master of the posterior exit, the inhabitants of the town had time to escape across the Rhene. A massive cupolated building terminated the hinder part of the



court, whose gilt dome sparkled far out in the plain. From thence one entered the imperial gardens which stretched down to the Rhenus, whose rapid course the eye could best note by marking how the green waves shot past the beach- and willow-trees with dartlike rapidity. As the inexhaustible waters day after day foamed, unwearied, unlessened, insurmountable, for centuries on centuries, well could man, the child of the hour, come to the conclusion that he was a god. One of the arteries of the globe, never stopping ever throbbing, lay before him, which led the clouds to the sea, to become clouds again. The ditches ran past the trenches of the Munimentum, and the old marshy bed of the Nicer, now deviated, had been included in the plan of the fortifications and made this water-fortress almost impregnable. He who had drawn out the plans of this fortress, was none less than Valentinian himself, for which his courtiers highly sung his praises. "I was present, most revered Augustus," says Symmachus in his panegyric to the Emperor, "when thou having laid down thy weapons, sketched out the plans for the fundaments, and busied thy dexterous hand with buildings." Success had crowned the Emperor's labours.

Alta Ripa was the place on the right bank of the Rhenus, which remained longest in the possession of the Romans.

In the north turret room of this massive building sat a handsome stately woman who had not yet reached the thirtieth year, and at her feet played a boy. This was the fair Syracusan Justina, Valentinian's second wife, a woman of southern type. Outwardly cold and proud, inwardly hot and passionate, superstitious and cruel, silent, and yet eloquent in the language of eyes, reserved and sensual, weak of intellect and yet esteemed cunning, she was a thorough Sicilian. Uppermost among these contradictory qualities was the superstition, which she had early imbibed in her native island, and which predictions wonderfully fulfilled had ever more strengthened. Her black cruel eyes roved this day restlessly through the small bow-window towards the blue peaks of Mons Piri, from thence to the other side towards Mons Vosegus, then back again as she gazed fixedly at the Rhenus, as if she awaited some miraculous aid from one of these quarters of the globe. One saw that this beauteous female head was full of cares, plans, and projects, and yet

knew not how to set about, so as to attain her end. She had followed her husband to the land of the barbarians, so that she herself might not be thrust away for the sake of some more beautiful woman, as she herself had thrust the first Empress from her throne through her beauty. She had introduced into camp-life all the arts of æsthetic sensuousness, for she knew that therein lay an additional excitement for Valentinian's coarse soldier nature. Thus, therefore, had she covered the walls and floors with rich carpets; swelling divans surrounded her, and all sorts of costly cups and artistic figures stood on the tables. But the beautiful woman bowed in care her head powdered over with gold dust, whose rolled up hair disclosed the lovely slender neck, as she stroked the brown locks of her dark-eyed boy. Her stepson Gratian was not only Cæsar, but had become by Valentinian's orders Augustus, and Co-regent, and her little son had gone empty away. It is true that Gratian was harmless and good-natured, in her eyes almost a fool, but when once he became autocrat, would he forgive her for having supplanted his mother? Would he give her son a share in the empire, or were they both doomed to destruction,

as in this age of ever increasing barbaric habits it had become the custom to get rid of relations with dangerous claims? All this weighed on the suspicious mind of this hard woman, and when she in Valentinian's arms endured his coarse caresses, the idea ever shot through her proud brain, "I am after all but his concubine, otherwise he had also named my son Cæsar." When she had done pondering over this series of possibilities, then she racked her head with another, which indeed at the time lay more in the region of the probable. Who would answer for the fact, that either on that day or the next a military rebellion would not put an end to the scarcely founded dynasty? What would then become of her? The loss of Valentinian's gold helmet was for this superstitious Sicilian an evil omen. The Empire had already survived several hireling Emperors, did this event and her own portentous dream point to some German Imperator? Distracted by such fears the indolent Empress gave way more and more to the superstitious passion of wishing to fathom the future; she filled her rooms with all sorts of magic apparatus; defamed women and pale magi whom everyone carefully avoided, crept in the twilight

through the secret passages of the palace. Valentinian indeed scolded when he of an evening barked his shins against a mystic tripod hidden under the nuptial couch, or found of a morning magic rolls under the cushions of his bed. But he also in hours of trouble took refuge in her art and brooded together with her over cabbalistic calculations. In such gloomy researches was the beauteous woman deep that day, as one of her maidens announced Bishop Anaklet of Lupodunum. The wily Arian wished to pay his respects to her. Wearied and vexed Justina nodded her permission, nevertheless the visit did not seem especially to rejoice her.

The tapestry which covered the entry was now drawn aside and the tall figure of the bald Anakletus appeared at the door. His humble sly smile showed that he was not here for the first time. Over his white vestments of priest with the wide open sleeves he wore a violet garment and on this the stole adorned with golden crosses. In his hand he carried an ivory cross, which he kneeling on one knee presented to the Empress, who earnestly kissed it and then gave it back to him. "How do matters seem, most reverend Anakletus,"

asked the Augusta, motioning to him to rise, "on the confines of the barbarians, has the true gospel of Areios increased his flock, or have the Nicenes become here also more numerous, as indeed everywhere in the western Empire?"

"The true servants of God are still victorious, who render honour to the Father and praise him as creator, even as creator of the Son, but the wicked enemy pursues the lambs of my flock, and the hearts of all worshippers are deeply saddened, that by order of the supreme Augustus the Basilica of this town, which has become his court in upper Germany, has been handed over to the sneaking Theodulos, who gives to the Son what belongs to the Father."

"For the moment this cannot be altered, reverend Father," said Justina sadly. "So long as Ithacius is bishop of the palace, people of the same heterodoxy will be appointed even in the places where the Augustus resides. The country people and the army remain to us."

"But it is in the army, gracious lady, that they are trying to drive us away. Thou knowest, that the German auxiliary forces all acknowledge our true faith, but lately I heard that a raging

heathen who ordered the priests of our church to be flogged out of the camp at Argentoratum<sup>1</sup> has been sent to treat with the Alemanni. For this cause I am come to thee to pray thee to intercede. All the brethren who dwell along the Rhenus, the holy bishop of Tabernæ, Aquæ Aureliæ, Noviomagus, Borbetomagus, and Mogontiacum,<sup>2</sup> have warned me by letter to take heed of this wolf, who laid his hand on the Lord's anointed."

"Can Rothari be the Alemann?"

"Thus sounds his impious name."

"Complain then to Valentinian."

"We fear much that the sublime Augustus might find it right that the barbarian thrust out the priests from the camp, we fear also Cæsar Gratian."

"What has Cæsar to do with it?" now asked Justina, attentively fixing her large black eyes on the secretive face of the priest, who lowered his own through embarrassment.

"Well, he has drunk the brotherhood of blood with this savage heathen, and is thereby bound to protect him against every danger."

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<sup>1</sup> Strafsburg.

<sup>2</sup> Zabern, Baden-Baden, Speier, Worms, and Mainz.

"Brotherhood of blood?" asked the Empress, "what is that?" and her motherly arm drew the playing child to her, as if she feared for him some distant danger. The movement did not escape the priest, although he raised not his eyes.

"A barbaric and exceedingly godless custom," he said sanctimoniously, "comparable to the most cruel mysteries. Those who enter upon this unholy alliance, wound the arm which God made and let their blood trickle at the same moment in one and the same cup, then each drinks the half, swearing to stand by each other in every danger, and"—he added with a trembling sigh "to remove any who stand in the other's way."

Justina gathered the child to her and covered it with kisses. "Thee, thee will he slay, Gratian's blood-brother." But the child turned away and facing the priest said, "Thou speakest evil of my brother Gratian. I love Gratian, he is kind and plays with me. Thee, however, I love not, thou hast a bad face. Go away, I believe thou liest."

Justina quickly laid her hand on the child's mouth, but she blushed whilst the worthy Anakletus answered confusedly, "Poor little innocent. Yet



I was far from speaking any evil of Cæsar. But if this Rothari could only be kept away" . . .

Justina arose. "I cannot interfere," she said, "in matters concerning the army. Nevertheless I will retain thy wishes in my memory, and that thou mayest see that I do what I can, take here this gift for the house of God at Lupodunum." Thus saying she put her hands in a vase, and handed him several gold pieces of money. He took the money with humble thanks, and sinking once more on his knee, presented the cross to the Augusta who kissed it. "The Lord be with thee," he murmured, and disappeared behind the curtain

"Thou shouldst give no money to the old man," said the child, "he is wicked, and Gratian is good."

"Who knows, my child," sighed Justina, "who is a friend to thee besides thy mother?" and she bent over the boy, whom she wetted with her tears. "A barbarian as blood-brother," she said, "oh, I must ask the Sybilla, whether they will murder thee?" She immediately took a wax-tablet from a chest, on which she wrote some words; then she called the woman-in-waiting and gave her the tablet. Her little son climbed up on her

knee and began so pretty a prattle that even her tears dried, and only when she pressed him to her heart and covered him with kisses, then did one see in her joy that fear, the result of a crown acquired through guilt.

On the other hand Anakletus descended the back-stairs from the Empress' room with a contented smile, clinking with a look of satisfaction the gold pieces he had just received. But his joy was dulled by perceiving turning round a pillar up the wide front-stair the Nicene court bishop Ithacius. Large and full of majesty did the mighty one ascend the steps. His long-armed white tunica sat tight on the fat body, the broad cingulum moved up and down on the round stomach without finding anywhere a wrinkle, in which it could rest. Even the chin touched his breast almost without his stooping. Supported by the young Vulfilaich he comfortably moved towards the Emperor's apartments and his fat face beamed with official grace, as he bestowed his blessing on the courtiers who separated to the right and left.

"The fat in the land devour me," murmured the lean Anakletus, "but they fatten for the day of slaughter," as with raised head he passed by

his luckier brother in office with a spiteful look. "Another of those false brethren who creep into houses, and convert women heavily laden with sin by preaching to them that which tickles their ears," said the fat bishop to his young companion. "We shall nevertheless know how to bar the back-stairs against him. Here, my son, remain here till I call thee, then enter in. But only answer what is asked thee. All other speech is dangerous in the lion's den."

Thus saying Ithacius approached the Emperor's private apartments and ordered the velarius to announce him. After a while the curtain rolled back and having passed through certain rooms the bishop found himself before Valentinian. He bowed profoundly to the Augustus, but that day the giant appeared sullen. As if he overlooked the fat prelate, he strode up and down and looked through the round windows towards the blue chain of mountains, or at the fortifications beneath. Standing was not pleasant to the plump Ithacius, but he waited till the Emperor should notice him. The cunning man knew what caused the giant thus to pace up and down the room like a bear, and his news was suited to this secret. "What

bringest thou?" asked the Imperator suddenly of the fat priest, when the latter was least prepared, so that the Bishop started, for the squinting gaze of the sovereign seemed that day more dangerous than ever. "Pardon, gracious Augustus, if I turn thy attention from the welfare of the state to a question of the church. Thou knowest what great assistance my brethren gave thy sovereignty after the fall of the mad Julian. Thou owest it to us that Gallia and Hispania acknowledge thee."

"How much oftener shall I hear this impudent song, Ithacius? Say what thou hast to say or go."

"I want satisfaction," said the Bishop. "Behold here letters from the brethren in Colonia Agrippina, Bonna, Rigomagus, Confluentes, Bonconita, Mogontiacum, Borbetomagus, Alta Ripa, Noviomagus, and Argentoratum<sup>1</sup>, who complain of an insult, which even makes the Rhene blush. A presbyter of the Arians was impudent enough to force his way into the camp at Argentoratum to intrigue in favour of his heresy cursed by God, as he asserted that the German auxiliaries were by right members of his flock. The bishop of

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<sup>1</sup> Cologne, Bonn, Remagen, Coblenz, Bingen, Oppenheim, Mainz, Worms, Altrip, Speier, Strassburg.

Argentoratum who holds to the true faith, was naturally, as his duty bade him, at once on the spot, to bear witness against the wolf in sheep's clothing. Then just as they had commenced an argument and the hearts of the soldiers evidently inclined to the true doctrine, thy legatus Rothari to whom thou gavest the order to pass through the various garrisons appeared. He first commanded the priests peremptorily to be silent, then ordered them to leave, and as the bishop declared that he would only yield to force, the godless heathen commanded both the good shepherd and the false prophet to be driven out of the camp with blows."

"I have forbidden all religious disputes in the barracks. Rothari only did what was his duty."

"It is not his duty to strike a bishop. The church of Gallia will not quietly submit to a renewal of the persecutions of the faithful, and thy wisdom will not refuse to grant us justice against a rebel and conspirator, a spy of the Alemanni and a mocker of thine own majesty."

"So now we come to the matter. Thou hast another accusation against Rothari. What is it?"

"I must bring to thy remembrance an event which thou dost not willingly remember. Thou

knowest how in the great Alemannian battle the divine grace snatched thee like a brand from the fire, whilst thy chamberlain disappeared with thy helmet."

Valentinian's face flushed purple and his eyes shot lightnings, which looked all the more terrible, as the bishop did not know whether the squinting Emperor looked at him or at the wall. Nevertheless he continued, "This, the lost helmet, adorns as trophy the halls of Rothari's kin, and he has made arrangements, to procure this helmet for himself."

The Emperor fixed the plump prelate, one eye staring at the wall, the other at the ceiling.

"Who says this?"

"The Lord gave grace and turned the heart of Rothari's brother towards the gospel, so that he became a monk. He himself can confirm all I have said."

"Thus since he has become a Christian, he is ready to betray his brother?" asked the Emperor mockingly.

"He knows not that his brother acts culpably. Without suspicion he related to me the commission given to him by Rothari."

"Thus is it! Thou makest use of an unsuspecting man, hurlest through his testimony his

brother to destruction and himself to despair, and then to defend such knavery, hast at hand a text or two."

A hot flush of rage spread over the bishop's fat face, but he restrained himself and said with much dignity: "I was silent in order to unmask a traitor, who places thy helmet on his own head not in play, but as a diadem."

"Proofs, proofs!" roared Valentinian, now roused and the veins on his temples swelled. The bishop stepped to the door and spoke a word to the centurion on guard. Soon afterwards appeared, led in by the officer, the pale, rough-looking young monk, who entered before the Emperor with up-raised head. The highest law of his order was never to tremble before the mighty ones, but boldly and fearlessly to testify before the gods of the earth. The Emperor cast one of his crooked angry looks at him, and said: "Thou wert the snob who broke into the shouts of the crowd with his squeaking."

"I am sent to call the mighty ones to humility, that they may not imagine themselves to be gods, and that the angel of the Lord smite them not, as he did Herodes Agrippa, before whom

the courtiers worshipped, and then the worms devoured him."

"And I am sent to punish such impudent knaves," cried Valentinian angrily. "Centurion, take this man outside, and let him be flogged till the conceit is knocked out of him, then bring him back."

The young monk turned pale. He cast a look towards the windows as if meditating flight, then turned beseechingly towards Ithacius. The bishop, however, quickly made a sign to go, and thus avoid something worse. Vulfilaich went out with the centurion quietly like a lamb to the slaughter.

"Think, it is Rothari's brother whom thou thus ill treatest," whispered the bishop. Valentinian made a motion as if to recall the centurion.

"A holy man, a monk"—

This addition spoilt all. "Just for that," said Valentinian, "I will at last set a bound to the impudence of this body. How about the helmet? what fearest thou?" added he shortly. The fat prelate was filled with silent rage at the fact that the Emperor answered his complaint as to the corporal punishment inflicted on a bishop by flogging



a monk, and with fear that in the end he himself might have to endure something unpleasant. The last consideration obtained the upper hand, and he answered submissively: "Thy grace knows what legend is attached to the possession of the augustan gold helmet, and what impression will be made on the army if some day it has to oppose Rothari wearing the golden ornament, which its Augustus lost in battle."

"Who tells you that he will do that?" roared the Emperor. "If he brings back the booty, in which his brothers swaggered, he is my friend. You, however, right reverend gentlemen, who imagine that I am a bow in your hands, on which you can lay your arrows and aim as you wish, are much mistaken. If Rothari is a heathen, he will have to render an account to the coming judge of this world, if he is a traitor, I shall punish him. Do thou, however, not interfere in matters which only concern me."

"Pardon me, if my anxiety to serve thee went too far," rejoined Ithacius coldly. "I only saw that it was a German, Merobaudes the Arian, who helped Macrian's son to escape from Mogontiacum, I saw that it was the heathen Rothari

who let Macrian escape, and who intends to have the insignia of sovereignty sent to him. As thy welfare is the welfare of the orthodox church, I came here, where I grieved to meet the wolf Anakletus on the steps leading to the Empress' apartments, but I did my duty; if Valentinian ends as did Julian and Jovian—I am not he from whom the Lord will demand this soul."

"Certainly, you understand about shots in the back, charcoal-fires, and quick-lime, as Julian and Jovian could testify for you. You are already considering by what wonderful dispensation I also may be removed from the scene of action, your threats show that! . . . Bunglers that you are. Why do you require me, if Rothari is in your way? Pray him dead, if you can. If you cannot do that, it is not worth while to support you more than Arians and colleges of priests who also can do nothing."

"Far be it from the servants of peace to stretch the hand out against sinners, before all other means are tried. At a time when we thought the sword might be rightly used against Priscillianus and his mad sect, thou didst refuse thy permission, now when thou leavest the road open, a higher voice

calls, sheath thy sword, Peter. My mission is fulfilled. I have shown thee the tares which grow in thy garden, see thou whether thou canst gather figs from a bramble bush. When the Lord wished to destroy Pharaoh, he first hardened his heart. I fear much, that this account foretells thy fate."

The Emperor answered not. None but the bishop of the empire dared to speak to him in this tone, and he had his reasons for tolerating this presumption. Morosely did he pace up and down till the mosaic pavement shook under his heavy tread. He evidently wished to reserve his last word till he had heard the monk. "Bring him in," he said to the centurion, who now returned alone. The officer shrugged his shoulders. "Pardon, sublime Augustus. I was not prepared for such dexterity from so delicate a youth—he escaped. We led him to the Rhene, so that his cries might not offend the ears of the Augusta, when suddenly he sprang from the dam and disappeared within the green waves. We hurried down the bank, to seize him when he rose again, but the holy man swims like an otter. He rose to breathe in the middle of the Rhene but against the stream, and then disappeared again. After a while we saw

him then moving about the rushes. I immediately sent boats across, and hurried up here, to report to thee what happened."

"I advise thee," said the Emperor coldly, "to catch thy prisoner again to-day, else lay down thy helmet and quarry out stones on Mons Piri." The centurion turned pale and disappeared as quickly as he could through the door after making a silent salute. Valentinian now angrily faced the Bishop. "Care fastens to thee as a shadow, it comes at times with thee, at others before thee, or again behind thee, but never remains away so soon as I see thee. Thou hast again thoroughly spoilt the day for me, and finally it will be with this affair, as with the hundred others with which thou hast troubled me. They disappear into nothing so soon as they are looked into. Go and summon the council. There thou mayest state thy complaint."

Thus saying the giant turned his back contemptuously on the prelate. The fat priest bowed his mighty head as if in grief. Then he stepped outside to order the chamberlain to execute the Emperor's summons.

Whilst the council of state was assembling at the already late hour of the afternoon, in the

usual corner room of the palace, Valentinian paced up and down his apartment in deep thought. Could the lost emblem of sovereignty really be in the hands of this German whom nature had already heightened by a head over all other men? Was he intending to cause the symbol to be brought there, so as to have it at hand? It was not possible. The bishop lied, or perhaps was being fooled by Rothari's brother. "How would it help me to get rid of Rothari," he thought, "none has as yet slain his successor. It is all the same whether he or another inherits!" But what enraged the Emperor most was that the vile hypocrite Ithacius should dare lay a finger on his weakest side, and to procure satisfaction for blows received by one of his brethren wish to set the Emperor on as he would a mastiff. Angrily did he say to himself, "Let thy bishop keep his whacks—I will not for that estrange my body-guard of Germans." But nevertheless a wicked doubt of the Alemannian's loyalty rankled in his breast. The release of the dreaded king on his own responsibility, the flight of Hortari the hostage, the secret meetings with the German monk—it was not necessary to be a suspicious tyrant to be startled by such indications.

"It will be fitting to keep a strict watch, woe to him, if I find that he really has the helmet," said Valentinian in a low voice. "Fool that I was, to help him out of the pit that time. Now I must get another Mica, because almost on his account I got rid of her."

In the meanwhile the Emperor's confidants met together in a room at the side, whose door opened into the wide bow-entry to the court, Justina holding her little son by the hand, Gratian, Merobaudes, Arator, Gratian's former Mentor Ausonius, the secretary of state Syagrius, the bishop Ithacius, and the dux Hermogenes. Whilst Gratian amused himself by playing with his little brother, and for a moment dispelling by the grace of his amiability Justina's suspicions, the Emperor's other advisers exchanged cold inimical looks. Valentinian had made it a fundamental principle never to distribute the highest offices among friends, but only among enemies. The Augustus entered and seated himself down on a chair near Justina.

"Thy charges," he then said shortly to Syagrius. Sharply and clearly did the Notarius relate his experiences on the mountain, his suspicions against the feigned dealer in furs, his urgent warning,

Arator's indifference and Rothari's treachery. The bishop broke in from time to time with exclamations of horror, which the plump Ausonius with the good-natured fat face and small easily affected mouse-eyes, just as often parried with silencing sounds of doubt. The Notarius worked more and more into a heat, his nose glowed, his eloquence became more commanding, till he finally sat down with a charge of high treason against the treacherous German. None of those present had expected that Syagrius would have gone as far as that. The matter seemed now more serious than before and a death-like silence reigned in the semi-dark room. The first to speak in favour of Rothari, was Arator. He declared, that immediately after the flight of the king, Rothari had informed him who the fugitive was. "Indeed," put in Syagrius, who immediately scented a complete conspiracy. But Arator added calmly that he had approved of Rothari's reasons, for Macrian as prisoner would have been rather an anxiety than a gain. Full of unction the bishop next rose. He pointed out, how the exercise of pardon was the prerogative of God, and of his deputy on earth, the Emperor. He mourned that Valentinian was robbed by a German merce-

nary of an opportunity of showing grace to Macrian. The beauteous fruit of peace would have sprung forth from this the Emperor's grace, but the seed had been destroyed by Rothari. Not without deliberation had he acted, but to do the barbarian king a service, and thus assure his return to the enemies of Rome.

"Let none be deceived by the true-heartedness of the barbarians," he cried. "They are with their good-natured kindness more tricky than many a Greek, whose cunning knavish face warns people of danger. One can have fair hair and blue eyes and yet be a thorough scoundrel." As servant of the Good Shepherd he was a man of peace, but as imperial councillor he voted for death.

The Arian Comes Merobaudes now broke out against the Nicene bishop Ithacius, who here only indulged in his religious hatred. According to the power given to Rothari he had a right to act as he had done, however one might judge his action to be wise or foolish. Rothari was beloved by the German auxiliaries. If he were proceeded against, he would not answer for the consequences. With the exception of the Batavian cavalry, he blustered out, the Germans would withdraw to a man. The



Dux Hermogenes denied that, without, however, wishing to urge harsh measures. The plump Ausonius next aired his eloquence. He lauded the worthy bishop and the wise Arator, he praised Syagrius' penetration, and Merobaudes' military insight, he quoted the poets and former resolutions of the senate, and finally found, that though in reality Rothari had acted very rashly, nevertheless it was extremely agreeable that one did not find oneself that day engaged in an Alemannian war. For how startled had he been the day previous by the signal fires, and when he had heard in what condition Syagrius' troops had arrived into the camp on the Nicer, how they had almost shoved each other in the river so as to more quickly get to the gate, then he must, although himself no soldier, much doubt, whether it had been advisable to excite the Alemanni by taking their king prisoner. Gratian laughed at this frank confession of his Mentor, but Merobaudes took the troops under his protection, and Justina now supported him by nodding her pretty head. This gave the bishop another opportunity of testifying against Rothari, and Justina encouraged him with glances that said much. Even Syagrius repeated his charges,

but the Emperor sat silent gnawing his lower lips. It had now become almost dark in the hall. The moon had arisen in the skies and cast a white beam in the room. The air became closer and it seemed as if the obstinacy of the plaintiffs must get the upper hand over the weak defence. Gratian would willingly have spoken up for his friend, but according to his father's strict command once and for all given he only belonged to the council, and a word from him could spoil everything. Thus he held his little brother in his arms, who had since long fallen asleep. As the pertinacious arraigner repeated his charge, he gave up all hopes. He thought only of an appeal to his father's clemency so soon as the meeting was over. Finally the Emperor arose. Mercy was not to be read on his face. Those who knew him expected some terrible sentence, whilst he, however, only roughly ordered Justina and her child to leave the room, and desired torches to be brought in, but neither of these events happened. At that very moment the curtain parted as if moved by a breath of wind. Some one glided into the room, and where the pale moonlight sent a silver streak, the assembly suddenly saw a figure standing. A plain white

garment clothed her from her neck to her feet, gathered up under the bosom by a girdle covered over by the folds, the purple band of the free Roman was also to be seen gleaming around her forehead. With a firm step, drawn to its full height, the figure approached close to the Augustus. It raised its bare white arm and said in an earnest deep voice: "I have a message from the gods to the Augustus."

"Jetta," did Arator wish to cry, but already the messenger of the deity had begun.

"This day doubly weigh the deed, for double the results  
When in the sign of the Gemini enters the ascendant star —  
One wilt thou murder, two are there in the sign of the twins  
Or making one happy, thou makest of the happy, two,  
Think of the sovereign star, which doubly causes all to prosper.  
Be it thyself for good, be it the others for evil."

The mysterious voice ceased, but the pale white figure stood there as if about to dissolve in the moonlight. Justina shudderingly drew her child closer to her. Who could be the second offering required by the conjunction, other than her son in whom for her all and everything moved and had its being. But now Jetta quietly took the stool thus left free and sat down in a dignified

manner at the feet of the Augusta, who shudderingly moved away.

"Heathen lies and nonsense," bellowed out Ithacius in a loud voice. "Horror on horror. Women possessed of a devil force their way into the councils of Augustus with a message from their dæmon."

Jetta smoothed the folds of her dress with a look of indifference as if the words did not apply to herself. But Gratian immediately sprung up, his young face glowing with rage. The presence of his beloved gave him courage. "Blaspheme not, priest," he cried. "The prophetess speaks the truth and nothing but the truth. I have drunk the brotherhood of blood with Rothari and his fate includes mine own. Should he go into exile, I must follow him. Should he die, I die, thus runs the oath, and I will keep it." The youth had uttered these words hastily and now fell back so heavily in his chair that the young Valentinian awoke and began to weep.

All this time Valentinian had looked on calmly. Inwardly he felt grateful to Jetta for providing him with a means of escape. His superstition also was excited. He knew the law of the Chaldæans and was glad to be reminded of it. Conjunctions

he considered of importance and he had overlooked these. He slowly rose. "I have spoilt thee, my child," he said kindly to Jetta. "Hast thou messages of this sort on thy heart thou must give them to me in private, but not in the council chamber." Jetta blushed, but betrayed by no movement how she inwardly felt the reproof. The Emperor then added in a louder voice. "All you gentlemen have to-day given way to exaggerations. Why all this fuss about the release of a peasant. To me it seems rather a breach of discipline, than a state crime. Call Rothari, that I put an end to the affair. I will give him a fitting reproof. Moreover Jetta is entirely right. This is no day for important decisions."

By this time the ambitious priest had lost all control over himself. "If somnambulistic women and astrological nonsense are to decide the destiny of the empire," said Ithacius fiercely, "I will no more appear at the council of the Augustus." Valentinian then turned majestically towards the irate prelate. "No," said he coldly, "thou hast attended it for the last time to-day. I will not withhold the reverend Bishop of Ossonuba any longer from his flock," added he with cold irony. "The canones

of the apostles have decreed that a bishop should remain by his house of God. Important negotiations with the Gallic and Spanish churches have compelled us to call the reverend Ithacius away from the Basilica at Ossonuba. Now we can dispense with his services, and wish him to leave at the earliest hour to-morrow for his bishopric." The fat priest looked around the table horrified, but saw none but mocking, malicious faces.

"I shall go," said he defiantly. "He who chooses witchcraft and sorcery as supports, does not require the evangelistic counsels of orthodox bishops. I fear, however, that the Gallic and Spanish synods will treat the matter in a less friendly spirit than the mild Ithacius, who willingly severs himself from court and witchcraft." The fat prelate then disappeared through the door with much dignity.

A hearty laugh of Gratian's in which the others loudly joined, followed after him. "Seek Rothari," said Valentinian angrily, "and bring in lights. The moonlight affects the brain. I myself felt quite gruesome as Arator's beauteous child approached." Torches were brought and screwed into the indented corona of a high candelabrum,

filling with a genial red light the handsome room. Everything now looked more cheerful and peaceful. The counsellors, who in the wan moonlight looked like pale judges, now broke into quiet chats. The poet embraced the Comes Merobaudes, and told him of a new kind of fish, which he had discovered in the Nicer, and which also was edible. Syagrius approached Jetta, from whom he least expected disfavour for his line of action. Finally Gratian returned, but without the Alemann. "Rothari," he said, "saddled his horse about an hour ago, and rode off, as he is not accustomed to wait half-a-day in an ante-chamber."

"Now we shall see him again at the head of the Alemanni," cried Syagrius as his cruel eyes sparkled with a triumphant glow.

"Pardon me, noble Notarius," replied Gratian haughtily, "my friend said he intended riding to Arator's villa, and took that road."

"In that case we must condescend to let him know there our opinion," said Valentinian with a slight touch of irony. "So, Arator, I shall be thy guest in a few days. You, however, noble lords, remember that we must be united here on the confines of the empire. Forget what has been

said here and think only of one thing, which also fills my thoughts: of Rome."

The privy counsellors bowed, and whilst Justina and her sleeping child approached Valentinian, the others departed. Gratian joined Arator and Jetta, who received his compliments with supreme indifference.

"When will you abandon these melancholy arts?" Arator asked his daughter, "and cease to interfere in matters only suitable to men?"

"If ever on this earth justice moves with as even a gait, as do yonder eternal stars," replied Jetta calmly, "then women will no longer require to consult the constellations, but woman or not, I shall never quietly look on, while wickedness triumphs."

"I fear that the boy will end by wishing to marry this dreamy Velleda," said the Emperor to Justina, "and nothing will come of the marriage with the daughter of Constantius, which he postpones from month to month."

"Then marry Jetta to Syagrius," replied the Augusta. "That will establish peace between the Notarius and Comes, and we owe Syagrius some indemnity for his faithful intentions."



Valentinian laughed. "If thou canst bring it about, it will please me also. As I possess the most beautiful woman in my empire, I can wish some good to my servants. Thou must arrange matters, my hands are too heavy for such delicate work." Justina bowed her pretty head consentingly, receiving a gracious kiss from the loved lips of her lord. The imperial giant then passed his hand caressingly over the head of his sleeping little son, and strode away.

"He does not love us as formerly," murmured the Empress. "Jetta was right, to-day was not the day for Rothari. But one thing I must have, either the helmet or his head, the two must not come together."

As Valentinian entered the colonnade outside he saw a bent up figure crouching in the moonlight, which fixed an unpleasantly gleaming eye on the door, as if waiting for some one. "Is there no end to the goblins in this confounded palatium?" growled the Emperor. "How many shadows glide through these empty rooms? We are near to Wodan's wood, does one of the Alrauns come to me as once to Drusus, or is it a nocturnal image of the Goddess of the cross-roads? Speak!" he cried

approaching closer to the phantom. He then, however, burst out into a hoarse laugh. "Is it thou, thou old witch? Dost thou still wander in the land of the living, most evil of Hecate's daughters? Thy secrets would be more secure in the grave."

"The grave is not more silent than Phorkyas' mouth. Thrice have I lain therein," whispered the old woman in an insane manner; "but it kept me not, because you require me. And I served you well," she tittered idiotically to herself, whilst a gleam of satisfaction creased her withered countenance with a thousand wrinkles.

"Didst thou come with Jetta?" asked the Emperor, who knew not whether he had to do with a mad woman or cunning juggler.

"No," squeaked Phorkyas, "Jetta came with me. The Empress sent for me, so Jetta came also, as she trusts us not."

"Thus comes her knowledge?" said Valentinian. "It is all the same to me. But forget not that in thy trade one willingly destroys a worn-out tool, and never cross my path again unbidden."

The terrified old woman crouched in a corner. She, who feared nothing, trembled before that squinting eye. But so soon as the Emperor had

passed on, she hobbled into the apartments of the Augusta.

## CHAPTER IX.

QUIET once more reigned in Alta Ripa. The Rhenus flowed in its wonted manner behind the palace, and the uniform tread of the rounds or the challenge of the sentries sounded from the walls. The nightwind sighed in the long passages, and then loudly howled on finding itself confined between the high walls. The echo magnified ten-fold every sound in the white vault and the relief of the guards below echoed like thunder. The inhabitants of the massive building all seemed to have gone to rest, night and sleep buried town and citadel. Only in the window of the turret-chamber inhabited by Justina, flickered a ray of light which could neither proceed from a lamp nor a chafing-dish. A trembling streak gleamed there as from a sacrificial flame. As a fact a mystic fire had been lit on a tripod in the Empress' room, which shadowed in the high but narrow chamber quivering rings on the wall. Under the altar was a table covered with all sorts

of magical implements, round which sat the Empress and three women. Jetta, who had left her father alone, because Justina had sent for her in the dead of the night to the ill-famed chamber, was one. She had expected to receive a reproof for her bold intervention in the imperial council from Justina also, but she was disgusted and annoyed, to find the Empress busily employed in preparing her cabbalistic calculations, which Justina always arranged when terrified by any sign. Near the Empress sat a pale delicate-looking woman, not much older than Jetta, but with the trace of a deep heart-felt sorrow in her faded countenance. It was Fulvia, the wife of a centurion suddenly attacked with insanity, who now lived in a solitary house, the villa ad Rosas, out in the plain. She also seemed as if enticed thither against her will, and watched wearily and inattentively the movements of the old Phorkyas, who crouching on the ground had spread out before her leaves inscribed with curious character and figures, whilst repeating secret formulæ half-loud. An uncanny life seemed to have awakened in the old woman. Like the nocturnal beasts, who walk about by day timid and insecure, to gain at the approach of night

strength and confidence, so did the old woman now move about quickly and assuredly, as if she had shaken off the burden of years. With astonishing celerity she spread the stones and tablets out before her in wondrous combinations, till finally she quietly folded her hands and looking up with her one hard eye said in an indifferent tone, "the hour is now come." The others remained silent. The supreme guidance had evidently been left to the old slave, whom Justina also obeyed. "Three questions are permitted, choose," she said to the Empress. "Ask, if my son will reign," replied the beauteous woman. The eyes of the woman looked at Jetta. "Inquire as to Rothari's fate," whispered the latter in a wearied tone. Lastly the old woman turned towards the pale Fulvia. A sigh and slight shake of the head was her only answer. "Come, Fulvia," said Justina sharply.

"I came, Augusta, because thou didst command me. But since my husband became insane through the love potion which we here brewed" —

"Does not thy case also prove Hecate's power?" interrupted Justina in a hard voice.

"Certainly," answered Fulvia gently, "but I

have vowed never to set in motion a power which I cannot curb, when I have roused it."

"Then let her be," said the Empress angrily to Phorkyas.

"No one can be allowed to be a mere spectator," replied the old woman curtly.

"Then go," ordered Justina in a peremptory tone, and Fulvia arose forthwith. But Phorkyas stepped between her and the door. "No one must leave the room after that the conjuration has once begun," said the old woman authoritatively. "Wait, we shall render thee harmless. Look hard at this stone," said she turning to the sick woman, who powerless had sunk back once more on her seat. The old woman held up a gleaming talisman before her eyes. "Unmovedly." The pale woman did as she was commanded. Slowly did the witch hold the dazzling stone higher and higher. The eyes of the matrona followed the talisman obediently and became fixed. Phorkyas next waved her brown bony hands mysteriously over the head of the magnetised woman, and lightly stroked her temples. All the blood rushed out of the face of the tortured patient, and she became stiff like a corpse. "Good, now is she harmless." With more strength

than would have been ascribed to the old woman, she seized the unconscious Fulvia and laid her down on a cushion in the back part of the room. It was terrible to see, how the old witch, whose dishevelled locks fell about her face, thither hauled the apparently dead woman. Even Jetta shuddered.

"The third question," now commanded Phorkyas, returning to the tripod.

"Whom shall Jetta marry," asked Justina. Jetta wished to interfere, but both signed to her to remain silent.

"Shall I ask the moonlight on the wall, of the water in the sieve? Sephirot or the mother?"

"Let us do it by turns," said Justina. "First take the numbers. Ask about my son's future, Jetta."

The old woman handed Jetta a little box with stones and tablets. The latter first arranged them radiatingly, then diagonally, then perpendicularly, till the numbers and letters were sorted in rows. Then she added up. "Valentinian II. will reign," she said in a low voice. Justina examined the calculations and with a sigh of relief collected the stones. Phorkyas repeated the same process. "Rothari will live," said she after a short pause.

"Whom will Jetta marry?" asked Justina, hastily gathering the stones. Jetta hid her pretty head in both her hands, the old woman stared into the flame, whilst the Empress took the box in her lap, and spread out the stones one after the other in front of her, but she pondered long and appeared less certain than the others. "Syagrius," said Justina at length hesitatingly.

Jetta started up. She wished to protest, but she shrank back, for behind Justina stood the wife of the centurion, pale as a ghost, with deathlike eyes, and shaking her head as if the calculations were not correct.

"Fulvia!" cried Jetta, so as to call the attention of the Empress.

"She awoke too soon, we must close," now said Phorkyas, pointing behind the Empress. Justina looked round, and gazed at the resurrected matron with evil glances, but remained silent. "Be it so," she said at last, "take the things away."

Phorkyas raised a stone out of the mosaic pavement. A large space might be seen, in which she hid her boxes, phials, and covers. Then she lit a lamp, blew out the flame, and carried the tripod



to a corner, placing a cushion in front of it. The room then appeared like any other chamber. With a deep bow the two women took their leave of the Augusta. As Jetta, however, went along the arches of the gallery before the door, the pale Fulvia approached quite close to her. "Believe her not, she subtracted two stones and shifted the numbers. The first cypher appeared to be an R, she, however, moved the S to the top. I saw it plainly." "R," said Jetta meditatively. Her pale friend put her arms round her waist and followed by Phorkyas the two women sought the room allotted to them.

## CHAPTER X.

ROTHARI's German pride powerfully asserted itself, when told that Valentinian had called all his confidants to a state council, but excluded him. When he moreover heard that this council was being held to deliberate on his dealings with Macrian, he would have entered the hall unsummoned and cast his sword at Valentinian's feet, but was prevented by the velarius who refused him admission

and who succeeded at last by kindly advice in calming the enraged Alemann. But one quarter of an hour succeeded the other, without that the accused man was called in; finally he lost all patience, went to the stable and threw the saddle across his black charger. The sentries suffered the well-known officer to ride through the gate of the Munimentum unchallenged. Having reached the open he forded the shallow river and then galloped wildly across the plain facing Montes Piri and Valentiniani, whose peaks gilt by the evening sun rose prominently above the blue mist of the river-valley. The once so fruitful plain between the Nicer and Rhenus was only partly cultivated. Between sparsely grown fields and wild meadow grass luxuriated low shrubs and the dwarf fir. Here and there burnt down and ruined farms testified to the fate of the land in the last decennium. In the sinkings of the ground, flat ponds had been formed filled by the winter-snows and spring-rains, which the thirsty summer sun drank up. Then came newly cultivated bits with country villas, surrounded by freshly built up walls. The rise of water-fowl which suddenly darted up in front of him, showed the rider that a swamp was

near. "In such a moor," laughed he grimly, "the brave Emperor lost his helmet. He shall not receive it back since he has dealt badly towards me a second time." And he clapped spurs to his horse, so that the charger galloped with mighty bounds to Arator's house, which gleamed on the slope in the setting sun. At the gate stood Lupicinus with his head bound up, and Arator's servants who greeted in astonishment their master's guest thus returning alone.

But by the following morning the good-natured giant had slept off his wrath, moreover he found a note from Arator, telling him of the Emperor's pardon. In a milder frame of mind he passed away a peaceful morning-hour in Jetta's garden, reverently following the traces of the beauteous maid, whose mental influence was here everywhere visible. Full of her the warrior stepped out of the way of every small shrub and gave room to each gold-winged beetle so as not to crush it. Finally he sat down by the marble basin, where he had lately spent a happy evening with Arator's daughter. The sun poured down hotly on the bright pebble-walks and dreamingly did Rothari watch the labour of the humming bees, and the

flight of the giddy butterflies. What the future, what the Emperor's grace or disfavour brought him, was to him a matter of indifference, he thought but of Jetta. "Well, did Medea prophesy truly?" he heard buried in his dreams suddenly the full deep voice ask, which set his brain ever in a whirl. As he looked up Jetta stood before him. She had very quietly returned with her women from Alta Ripa. Deeply moved he seized her small white hand. "I thank thee. The courage which thou gavest me, saved me."

"Thy star saved thee," she said seriously, "and not a poor maiden. How hast thou spent the time which thou took away from us?" she asked in a tone of gentle reproof.

"I was in Flora's kingdom and kissed the traces of her pretty feet."

"If I could be a goddess," she said smiling, "I would not be Flora, but Bellona. For if I tend the flowers, it is only to prove, that these hills still belong to Italy."

"Dost thou consider the slopes of Wodan's wood to be Italian?" asked Rothari smiling.

"Where the laurel flourishes," she rejoined

earnestly, "is Rome. So far as the cypress thrives, the figs and grapes ripen, so far has nature herself placed our boundaries. Only where pines, bushes, and oaks grow, there begins the realm of of the northern gods."

"Thus dost thou wage war as did the heroes of the Iliad, in whose battles the gods themselves participated. The Olympians send from the south the gentle breezes to the aid of their beauteous prophet, whilst Wodan's wild army and his tempestuous north rage over the wood, and threaten thy bright creation. The higher powers struggle with thee and against thee for this land. But learn, fair Circe, the gods of Germany are here the more potent. For a while canst thou rear upon this hard soil the offspring of a milder sky, then, however, come the Teutonic winter-giants and destroy in one night thy whole splendour." The beauteous maiden proudly raised her head. "Thou art right," she said, "in this struggle have I found the epos of my life and up to the present have I been victorious. Who tells thee that thy gods are the stronger? See here Apollo's lovely blooming laurel, have I not preserved its sacred green through the second winter from thy giants? Thou

smilest? Spring comes here at the same season as in Rome. Go in March through the woods above here and see how the sunny slopes are strewn with purple anemones, with narcissi, primulas, and the blue star of the ever green vinka. I have seen twice, how on this slope the crocus, which the Romans who lived here before us cultivated in their variegated safran gardens, have renewed themselves. As we came into this land, it was called the wilderness, under our care it became a garden, and a century of German possession has not yet been able to destroy its traces. Seek these traces and then ask thyself whether we have any right to this hill."

"Dost thou then look upon us as so far beneath you?" replied he in an injured tone, "that all which is good and beautiful comes from you, what is bad and ugly from us? I think that each nation has its share of both, and the German is therefore not worse, because he is no Roman."

"Since I can feel am I proud of being a daughter of Rome," she said, "and since I think I know why." Then her voice became milder and her mode of talking more simple. Instead of the queenly upright bearing with which she had

paced at his side, she now let her pretty head bend in thought and buried herself in mournful recollection. She related to Rothari the history of her youth, how her pious clever mother had in person educated her, how death snatched away this excellent woman, just as the daughter was mature enough to follow the high flight of her thought. Her father then brought her to Gaul, where he had received a command on the eastern boundary. Amidst many dangers she went to and fro among the towns of the Rhenus, till in Cæsar Julianus a new star arose for the Empire. His restoration of the temples, his ceaseless struggles on behalf of the eternal gods and his warlike aims became the ideal of her dreamy maiden years. Her voice trembled as she mentioned how the disgraceful degeneration after the death of the great Cæsar, of his companion in arms, even of the amiable Ausonius, had deeply embittered her, and how she only lived again, when the task was imposed on her father of carrying out here in Upper Germany a part of Julian's plans. "Thou art amused," she said, "that I plant here laurels and cypress, twine roses and creeping vine from pillar to pillar and from elm to elm, but to me these

garlands of flowers are chains, which I lay on the land of the Barbarians to bind it to Rome. Thus should it ever be, that the men should fight on the confines, but that the women should advance behind Bellona's car, raise the wounded from the field and tend them, look after the altars, and reconcile hearts through the fostering of the beautiful and the good, they should dry all tears and deck the tombs with flowers. It behoves them to win through gentleness and kindly care the hearts of the people, conquered by the sword of their men." So pure and heavenly an inspiration gleamed at these words from the eyes of the beautiful prophet that Rothari could scarce restrain himself from falling at her feet and kissing the hem of her garment. Such a division of labour was entirely after his ideas. "Doubly bravely would I fight," he said with fiery glance, "if such a garden also bloomed for me, cared for by such hands."

"Thou belongest to us," cried Jetta joyfully, "thou wilt not return to yonder mob, as so many have done, who now defeat our armies by the arts which they learnt from us. But come, let us greet my father, who is now approaching." Rothari followed as if in a dream the elegant slender figur



who with so much grace preceded him, tall and proud as a queen.

Arator greeted Rothari, though not without reproaching him for his disappearance of the previous day: "Thou playest with thy head," he said, "as if thou hadst an hundred of them, and as i Valentinian was named the Augustus for a joke." He took Rothari aside and related to him the proceedings of the council. He mentioned not, however, Jetta's share in the Emperor's mild decision.

As the gigantic German wearied by many journeys and consultations laid aside his weapons that evening, mighty bands drew him towards the spot near the fountain where he that morning had sat with Jetta. Still lay the garden before him, and behind the wide blue plain. The drops of water fell in rhythmical intervals from the marble cup into the basin beneath. The night opened its dark eye, above gleamed the stars, and finally the moon itself arose full and large behind the mountains and its silver light again shimmered in the water's rings. The first sobbing notes of the nightingale now sounded in the branches of the bosquets, and the glowworms fluttered like green

sparks through the bushes. The young warrior breathed in the intoxicating exhalations of the jasmine hedge, whilst his ear eagerly listened for sounds. But Jetta came not. The disappointed Alemann was preparing to quit, when he heard on the terrace her bounding elastic step. "At last," he said joyfully. "I have long been hoping that the murmuring of the fountain would attract hither its fair mistress."

"Up till now I slept," said Jetta sadly, "till Phorkyas woke me. Thou art astonished at this upsetting of the order of the day, and it is perhaps better, if I acknowledge to thee the mysterious fate which pursues me, before that others warn thee against me, or that I without knowing it terrify thee. I dare not sleep in the moonlight. The goddess attracts me, I know not why or how from my couch, and I must then unconsciously without waking follow her pale light, ever towards her higher and higher. They say that I then know much that is happening at a distance, see through walls and read in the hearts of men. On the beams which illuminate me and things, knowledge comes to me from far distances, but it disappears when they return to darkness. This has caused my

father much grief, and many doctors have mistreated me, and would perhaps have destroyed my body, for it became ever worse and worse. Then an old slave advised me only to sleep when the moon had already passed my door and this simple means aided me. But I must spend the dangerous hours among my books or in conversation. Till the moon leaves the wall of this house must I wake, and as thou lately begged me to initiate thee in the divine art I come to use the silent hour for serious purposes, for only when Selene appears in the heavens, can I speak of them. Only when the goddess pours forth her clear light in the still night, only then do the deepest recesses of the soul of man unfold themselves like the calix of the flower to receive the dew which falls from heaven."

Rothari was grieved in his heart. There seemed to be too much of the wondrous in the woman whom he loved, and now she wished to disclose deeper secrets to him: "Art thou so certain," said he hesitatingly, "that thine art really has power over nature and the deity, and that accident does not occasionally fulfil thy prophecies, and harken to thy prayers?"

"Accident does not exist in the strict chain of events," replied Jetta seriously, "and I have no other power over the secret cords on which they hang, than that which thou possessest, only that I know how they run and are connected."

"For my part I know nothing of any such power that I might have," Rothari remarked doubtingly.

"Hast thou never noticed in astonishment," rejoined Jetta, "that some dear wish of thine has been suddenly and wonderfully fulfilled? Thou wished to see some friend and at the next minute thou hearest his step on the threshold. Thou didst think of thy beloved and her slave entered bringing thee some letter or gift from her. To thine enemy thou didst threaten death and it fell on him at that selfsame hour. By thy strong will and wishes didst thou stretch the threads on which depend the circumstances, but it appertained thereto, that thou at the right hour, at the right day, in the right manner threw thy wish into the network which the Demiurg spun. It was in reality accident till the time when thou didst direct fate. Well then, what has till to-day unknowingly rendered thee happy at times, thou shalt for

the future know and shudderingly practise. I will unveil to thee the secret combination of events and show thee, how thou must grasp in the spokes to direct the great wheel according to thy pleasure." Rothari shuddered. He had in truth already lived to see the evidence of his wishes with their realisation, as every man has already been thereby astonished. He had then returned thanks to Wodan, Donar, or Freya, that they had heard him. That he himself had been the deity which directed the events, horrified him. "A fearful science," he wished to say, "let the veil remain unlifted."

But Jetta continued in her quiet voice. "As my teacher instructed me in the rudiments of the sacred arithmetic, she called my attention as to how the hand of the deity was plainly to be recognised in that all things were so artistically portioned off, divided and told. The relationship of parts is the foundation of the eternal divine order, and all order depends on numeration. The harmony of numbers is therefore the secret of the world, and the mathematical relations of things are the substance and marrow of its being. The universum depends upon a great hidden system of numbers, on the combinations and configurations of single

numbers the bodies are subject. In that hast thou the entire secret of the All."

Jetta ceased speaking and fixed her dreamy black eyes on the young warrior. Rothari could not say that these views were entirely new to him, only he had never looked on them as introductory to magic. New was the feeling of discomfort that came over him. Her flow of learned language displeased him. Women are only original through the manner of their sensations, so soon as they theorise, even if it be in the most exemplary manner, they appear to men as a malformation which is perhaps curious, but is never delightful. The German had noticed with veneration how Jetta conjured, but her philosophising was unsympathetic to him. The unpleasant idea came into his mind, that if she continued to do so, he by the end of the lesson would no longer be in love with her. Up till then happily had he listened rather with the eyes than with the ears. He thoughtfully contemplated those finely cut lips and bold chin, which gave to the youthful oratoress the expression of proud persistency and restrained passion. As she now suddenly ceased speaking and awaited an answer from him, he knew not what to say. But

to make at least some kind of reply, he said "Pythagoras." "Quite correct," cried the philosopheress eagerly. "Pythagoras has explained the world by the mysterious harmony of numbers. As numbers divide each other equally or unequally, so avails in the world of phenomena the law of the contrary; for this cause avails straight and crooked, unity, singularity and multiplicity, right and left, limited and limiting, male and female, rest and motion, light and darkness, joy and sadness."

"Plato also teaches," here put in Rothari, "that the deity ever makes use of geometry, for in the adjustment and arrangement of certain arithmetical relations consists their world-forming potency."

"Good," said Jetta quite pleased. "The world with its four quarters depends on the mathematical necessity of the square, the fire on that of the pyramid, the air on that of the octahedron, and because there must be a globe, for this arose the world. For the world is nothing else than seven globes set one into the other, which turn in different degrees of rapidity around a common focus, the hidden hearth of Hestia, and thus cause

the harmony of the spheres." Rothari gazed up at the sky and this wide perspective, how the planetary heavens and those of the suns shifted through one another, this world contemplation of phantastic greatness caused him to shudder. With a thankful inclination of the head his eyes returned to the lips of the beauteous speaker.

"Should we now wish," continued Jetta, "to imitate the deity and become actively creative,—magic is indeed nothing else, we must explore the importance and effective power of particular numbers and figures. *One* is, as thou knowest from Pythagoras, no number, for it is no sum. Even *two* only contains the unmediating antithesis. *Three* first begins to be a number, it has absorbed in itself and overcome the antithesis of *one* and *two*. It has beginning, middle and end. From it the first and fundamental number all proceeds. Therefore is, as even the Christians acknowledge, *three* the fundamental number of the divine Being, and the triangle the symbolum of the Godhead. The world proceeds from God, from *three*, *four*. Therefore is *four* the fundamental formula of the world and the square the symbol thereof." Thus saying the lovely woman bent forward so as to draw on the



sand these two figures close to one another. Rothari made the same movement and her dark tresses mingled for a moment with the golden locks of the German. A delicious shudder ran through him and instead of following her tracings on the sand, his eye remained fixed on the rich contour of the neck and shoulders of this blooming Sibyl. She, however, rose up and flushed with her exertions continued. "Thus therefore because *four* is the symbol of the world are there four cardinal points, four divisions of the day, four seasons, and four ends to the world."

"The earth is a square, and the All is a sphere," confirmed Rothari confusedly.

"So is it," said Jetta. "Let us add together the *three* and the *four* that means God and the world, and the sacred number *seven* arises, whose signification is the embodiment of the conjunction of God and the world. Through it is the intercourse between the two. Therefore, are there seven days of the week, seven planets, seven gates of the soul in the head, seven highly sacred spirits, who surround the god of the *Parses*, and with us are subject under different names to the eternal Zeus. Learn now, moreover,

another sacred number, *ten*, the foundation of the decimal system, which the kosmic order includes in its eternal legality. What surpasses ten, ever returns back within itself. Therefore it is the *ten*, which formed the lawful change of kosmic life."

The prophet arose. "I have now prepared the ground. Bury thyself in these contemplations, and to-morrow when the moon rises above yonder chain of mountains, return to this spot, and I will begin with the practical application of this sacred importance of numbers."

The warrior would willingly have retained the beauteous woman on this warm May night, though she had appeared to him lately much more beautiful when speaking to him of Rome than in the present day explaining these mysteries. But shyness closed his lips and whilst he hesitated she had already disappeared.

The Alemann remained behind with mixed feelings among the blossoming shrubs near the pattering fountain. The depth of the perceptions, which Jetta had exhibited to him, worked powerfully in his love of the mystical. He pondered again over what the mysterious maiden had said to him. It was indeed possible, that through her, light con-

cerning the arcana of existence would come to him. Had not seers among his people also, such as Velleda, had communication with the deity and prophesied the future? His feeling for this beautiful creature was thoroughly imbued with the veneration of the German for the presaging mind of woman. And nevertheless he could not overcome a certain discomfort, that it should be she, who was appointed to become his guide in these dark depths. What would she want with all that knowledge, when she was his wife? When he formerly had dreamt of choosing a spouse for himself, he had thought of the virgins of his own land. A modest, innocent heart, unconscious of itself, must it be, that should gladden him, Jetta was the opposite of all this. She was a sorceress, who at times confused and calmed him, but it was impossible for him not to love her. "She is," he said to himself, "too young for a Sibyl, too rich in charms, therefore should she leave these melancholy arts alone. She has better secrets to hold to, which render happier: the great secret of man and wife." And not very clear about his own feelings he sought his couch.

This divided sentiment did not leave him, when he rode out the next morning to inspect the new

roads of the neighbourhood. The spouse, which he chose for himself must belong in the quietness of home to him, but would Jetta be willing to be thus placed in the background and was it not wrong to put her in the shade? Would she also willingly surrender what she called her mission? She was accustomed to hold converse with the upper and lower gods, would she then be satisfied with ordering maidens and rearing children? Must not such a marriage end as did that of Jason with the sorceress of Kolchis? His head hung low down on the neck of his horse, as he rode forth buried in these dreams, and his mental anguish increased as he turned homewards and the double heights of Mons Piri with two stone rings of the Alemanni lay before him. Much oftener than usual did he use the whip and then tighten the rein, when the horse, misunderstanding the movement, broke into a trot. "I have become a wretched horseman, since I aim at being a sorcerer," said he peevishly. He felt himself rather fascinated than happy. The very admiration which Jetta inspired, was at the same time dangerous to his love. To be loved by a Sappho, flattered him perhaps, but what man would like a wife mentally superior to

himself? All this Rothari said to himself though not so openly and distinctly, but he would have much preferred Jetta to have had but her sweet smile and not the deep knowledge of the mystic numbers. On his return into the house, he had determined not to wed her. Nevertheless he was impelled to go out of the house into the garden long before the hour appointed by Jetta. A sultry warm night lay over the blossoming bushes and a heavy stormy air brooded over the gently murmuring stream. Only from time to time did a gentle breeze move the branches, and foretold the advent of a mild spring rain. Rothari remained on the terrace listening to the dreamy sounds of night and its mysterious embraces. The moon came late and as it finally arose, it was full and wan, and its light more pale than on the previous day. Obedient to the order Rothari now went down to the marble fountain, where Jetta's beauteous figure met his view even from afar. She sat, her head leaning against the trunk of an old maple tree, with her bare arms crossed across her bosom. By the faint moonlight she appeared paler than usual. A wide white garment enveloped her in delicate folds, which picturesquely draped down-

wards to her strong but pretty ankles. She greeted him with a look full of sad earnestness, slightly moving her head. Her eye hung then a while on the pale disk of the moon; she seemed to pray; then immediately preventing any personal remarks, she proceeded with her instruction: "I showed thee yesterday," she began in her deep melodious voice, "how numbers are the germs of a being, and the phenomenal world formed itself, as the deity combined numbers together, or they regulated themselves within the divine existence. Now, however, thou knowest that the numerical signs of the Chaldæans are likewise letters, and may be deciphered as a word. Therefore do the Hebrews, Chaldæans, and Christians say, not incorrectly, that the world was created by the word. The numbers which form the fundamental relations of the world are together the divine creative word. How do we find this sacred creative word?" she asked as her voice became subdued and sank down to a mysterious whisper. "We add the sacred numbers together and thus find the unspeakably mysterious Logos, by which the Godhead created the world and which is still creative at the present day. I will teach thee, when thou art fitted, the word in

its inflections. For to-day only so far: All numbers and letters are not of equal value. The first, middle and last letters of the alphabet, in which the whole rest, are the *matrices*, the secret sources of existence. They form the beginning, end and middle, thus thesis, antithesis and medius terminus depend on them. Thou, however, perceivest the three in all that exists. Thou seest water and fire and as *medius terminus* air, mind and body and as medius terminus the soul. Nothing exists which does not depend from those three as the whole alphabet from the matrices. Everything has beginning, end and middle. To these three letters come other three, which may either be pronounced softly or hardly. The pure antithesis which goes through everything earthly depends on this quality. Through it is life and death, peace and war, wisdom and foolishness, joy and sorrow etc. There remain still twelve plain letters; they influence the plurality and manifoldness of things. On account of these the horizon has twelve corners, the year twelve months, the body twelve members. Nevertheless each of these has its special quality which for the combination of magic formulæ is highly important. In these letters lie concealed mysterious operating powers,

theurgical means, powerful talismans, protecting amulets, terrible ban formulæ."

Whilst Jetta was thus speaking in low tones, the west wind began to increase in violence, and the murmuring in the tops of the old maples to heighten; one heard the branches creaking one against the others, whilst the clouds drove past in wild haste across the face of the moon. Jetta did not appear to notice this; with increased energy she continued: "On account of this property of letters it is not a matter of indifference how things are named. That the Godhead combined these letters together as a name, makes his being, his life, his character. The cipher of each thing is the basis of the noumenon. For this cause even insignificant names ward off evil portents, because they counterfeit these secret forces of the name." The gaze of the prophetess turned upwards towards the sky, in which the clouds now drove past more wildly: "Thus there are names of the Godhead," she continued, "at whose mention the entire world even at the present days groans in its grooves." She hesitated and seemed to meditate. Then she said mysteriously: "The most beneficent of the seven unspeakable names,



which I even mention to thee to-day is: Jao Kabao." In the horizon lightening began to play and the distant roll of thunder might be heard. A light superstitious shudder ran over Rothari. "The wise, however, the scholars of the Chaldæans know how to derive from this one name all others. Thus the second whose influence is more powerful is Kaulaukauch." A vivid flash illuminated Jetta's ghostlike face, and a louder peal of thunder announced the approach of the hurricane. But the prophetess continued quietly, though the wind already covered her with dust and loose leaves: "The third name, however, is the name which shakes the earth, and terrifies the gods above and below"—a terrific thunder-clap which made itself heard almost at the same moment as the lightening struck drowned her voice. The lightening illumined her fanatic dread-inspiring tall figure from head to feet. Her lips trembled, her eyes became fixed. Rothari knew not whether she had mentioned the name or been silenced. He sprang up terrified and called, "Donar, hear her not," and turning to Jetta said: "I beseech thee be silent."

Pale and majestic she turned towards him: "What hast thou done? The favourable hour is

now gone, before another year has passed I dare not reveal further signs to thee." And while the rain poured down breaking the blossoms from the trees, whilst thunder and lightening followed on each other, she silently covered her head with her upper garment as a protection and quietly passed before him to the steps. He followed her not. She appeared to him diabolically beautiful, but he feared her. "An awe-inspiring woman," he murmured. "How can she soil these pure virgin lips with the dark horror of these magic spells." Seated on a stone railing he held out against the torrents of downpouring rain. This rain which she had called forth before his very eyes cooled his head. Finally, however, the never ceasing torrent forced him to his room. Here he took off his wet clothes and wrapped up in his cloak listened to the dropping of the rain on the roof, the rushing of the gutters into the impluvium which continued outside in the atrium its monotonous splash. The close storm-atmosphere in his narrow room depressed almost to suffocation. The horrors that he had seen, excited him: "She would surrender herself as a queen," he said to himself, "but is she worth possessing?" No, his low vase

over. He felt as if he had taken up a book, because in the front pages it contained some beauteous madrigal, but on being further unrolled was filled with dark cabbalistic signs, with mystical horrors, and he shuddered. "Fly, Rothari, fly," cried out an inward voice. But she was so beautiful with her dark eyes, this Junonian form—and he cast about uneasily on his pillow. He would have most enjoyed saddling his horse and riding forth to face both weather and storm. He suddenly heard a light creeping step. The red gleam of a lamp fell through the opening, his nervously excited ear caught the sound of the rustling of a female dress, some one groped toward his room. Quickly did he jump up and throw his cloak around him. Then he opened the door carefully and shrank back. The old woman stood before him whom he had noticed outside the room, the first morning that he had slept there. His start seemed to amuse her. She had often had an opportunity to delight at this impression produced by her charms. One eye lighted up mockingly and even the other might be seen twinkling under the sunken lid. As she held up her oil-lamp higher the thousand wrinkles on her yellow face furrowed deeper and

sharper, and the gray fluff on her cheeks gleamed silvery. Nevertheless Rothari did not find her that day so hideous. "Whom seekest thou, little mother," he asked in a kindly tone.

"Thee, Lord," she cackled low.

"And what bringest thou, good mother?"

"A message from my mistress." The blood rose to the soldier's cheek, whilst the old woman inwardly chuckled. "Jetta," she continued wheezily, "requires thy help for herself and her father. Syagrius has intentions on her and will be here to-morrow with the Emperor. Thou art supposed to be the only one whom the Emperor hears. She prays thee to stand by the Comes and not quit the house till Valentinian has been."

For a moment he thought after this surprising application to demand an interview from Jetta. But a feeling of reverent awe restrained him. His voice sounded hoarsely as he hastily answered: "Tell thy mistress I shall come, and if she wishes to confide further in me I shall be ready at any hour and place she may name."

The old woman nodded, he knew not whether it was through weakness of the joints or through assent that she repeated this movement without

ceasing. She seemed to have begun shaking her head and now to be no longer able to stop.

She then turned away without greeting and disappeared slinkingly into the Tablinum. Rothari saw the red lamp gleam between the pillars of the peristyle. Her creeping steps echoed above, and then nothing was heard in the whole house but the trickling of the rain water into the impluvium and the splashing of the drops on the flat roofs. This monotonous song finally lulled the warrior to sleep, and it was late when he awoke.

## CHAPTER XI.

VOICES and steps sounded in the Tablinum. Rothari startled out of his sleep opened the doors and listened attentively. He heard Valentinian's deep commanding tones. "There must be an end to these petty jealousies," said the Emperor. Hastily did Rothari fasten on his sandals and thrust himself into a woollen tunic. "The condition of the province requires, that you work together not only in appearance but in heart."

Rothari hurriedly arranged his beard and hair. "Syagrius has confided to the Augusta a wish, which my wife has confided to me. Justina is wise in all things, especially in an affair in which the advice of women is well placed."

"May Donar smite her," ground out Rothari, throwing his sword-belt over his arm and his cloak across his shoulders. Quickly but lightly did he stride across the open entry dividing the Atrium and Tablinum, and soon beheld the gigantic form of the Emperor comfortably lying back in a chair. His appearance resembled that of a lion at rest, and only the flaming eye reminded one that this was the same Valentinian before whom men trembled. Behind him stood the red-bearded Notarius carefully attired, at his side Arator, on whom Jetta leant, majestic as ever but pale. She looked sadly at the new comer as if she would say to him, "Thus dost thou heed my first request? Thou sleepest whilst they cast lots over my fate." The Emperor only noticed Rothari's entrance by a frown and then continued in a louder voice. "Justina thus intercedes that thou mayest give thy daughter to Syagrius as wife, so that the peace between you may become lasting." A motion at

his side called Rothari's attention to Gratian leaning against a pillar, shuffling more restlessly than ever his long limbs hither and thither.

"I have already half-engaged my daughter to another," answered Arator confusedly. "Pardon me, my Lord, if I seek first to redeem old pledges, before I enter into new ones."

Valentinian raised his leonine head and his face darkened.

"I thought that it would come to this," spoke up Syagrius in his cutting tones. "Thou seest, Augustus, how little value the Comes sets on our peace. All these are but excuses, I know all the young men in the camp. There is no one here who dares raise his eyes to the daughter of the Comes."

Arator rejoined proudly: "As father I may be supposed to know that best."

"I know no one, none," answered Syagrius sharply back.

Rothari looked towards Jetta, who had drawn herself up to her full height, and pale but fully composed listened to the argument. This fair white face did not express fear, but restrained passion showed itself on her countenance. "Shall

I be disposed of as if I were but a horse?" the frown on her young brow seemed to say. As Syagrius so obstinately relied upon the Emperor's consent, and the latter began angrily to rock on his chair, she turned paler, and at the Notarius' bold assertion: "I know no one," she suddenly raised her dark eye lashes and shot a supplicating glance towards the German. She was no longer the Medea who had held him fettered between awe and veneration. It was the look of a loving woman seeking aid, of one requiring protection like any other woman. As if impelled by a higher power, the German stepped forth and cried: "I am that no one, I am a suitor for Arator's noble daughter." The Notarius turned pale. But from the other side came also forth a short fat wearer of the toga; it was Ausonius. "May thy grace pardon me," said he in his most dulcet tones. "When the matter is thus argued so publicly, as to who is worthy to be the husband of the fair Jetta, then I must testify that from early youth, that is youth on her side, a bond of friendship joins us, which I would gladly turn into one of Hymen's bonds."

"And Bissula?" cried Gratian in a mocking tone.



"Bissula is a slave and must reconcile herself," said the small man with much dignity. The perplexed Comes proudly crossed his arms and wrapped himself closely in his mantle. Jetta had cast down her eyes, and her expression in no way betrayed what she felt. The Emperor burst out laughing. "Did I not at once tell Justina that I was in no way fitted for a match-maker. I should have as a fact disunited Syagrius with Rothari and Ausonius instead of reconciling him with Arator. Now let the maiden decide. I am content if two of you remain friends, the third then will have to submit. Now, proud daughter of Rome, which dost thou prefer, the Alemann, the Gallic Ausonius, or the Greek?"

"Grant, noble Lord, that a free Roman woman of a distinguished race gives herself as free, and perhaps neither to the German, nor to the Gaul, nor to the Greek."

The Emperor laughed. "I have always said," he jokingly answered, "that Arator's daughter resembled one of those fair Greek women for whom heroes fought and nations were turned upside down. But remember, my child, that the Greek ships almost came to grief over the beau-

teous eyes of Briseis. Decide, before that I undergo such losses as did king Agamemnon."

"The suit of these gentlemen does me much honour, but I must prove myself," replied Jetta evasively.

"Prove them, you mean!" said the Emperor laughing. "Good, but prove them as Romans, or for aught I care as did Penelope her suitors with bow and arrows."

"I agree to the latter proposition," said Jetta gaily. She took in her small white hands the end of her veil and gathered it gracefully around her shoulders. She seemed quite to have shaken off the fear, which she had previously felt. Rather did a light irony appear on her face as she drew herself up and spake like a queen: "My father has given me a small estate on the promontorium, called by the Alemannian slaves the Bühl. To-day my farmer writes to tell me that a she-wolf has her den at hand, and daily robs me of some animal of my flock, at times a chicken, at others a kid, or lamb. She feeds her young ones somewhere in the neighbourhood, but the man cannot find her cavern. Will you, noble lords, hunt her with me? I do not say that I will belong to him

who slays the beast. A slave might do that and we no longer live in the heroic times, when Atalanta was won in the foot-race. But a hunt in the May-woods calms the mind and by the time the hunt is over we shall perhaps all of us have re-considered the matter."

"The Augustus himself bows before so much beauty," said Valentinian, as the clumsy figure painfully inclined before the graceful maiden. "I know that Jetta has a high opinion of me, and I will prove to her that I also hold much to her." Syagrius made a movement of displeasure, but the Emperor addressed him consolingly. "Thou art reckoned to be a good shot, Greek, give not up the matter as lost beforehand. I return to Alta Ripa. Justina will be delighted to hear the result of this hunt. Whoever the lucky man may be, I wish him joy of such a prize."

He was about to leave the room when Rothari crossed his path. "Sublime Augustus," said the German coldly, "I lay down mine office here in thy hands."

Valentinian started: "I was accused of treason," continued Rothari, "and hold therefore a charge as recalled, which above all things demands con-

fidence. Let me serve thy son, but I can no longer carry on negotiations with the Alemanni."

Kindly did the Emperor answer, while one eye fixed the floor, the other gazed at the wall: "Who told thee that I do not trust thee? Do thou remain here with Arator and that thou mayest see how surely I count on thee, I place the watch-tower on the western slope of Mons Piri under thy orders, till better work may be found for thee." The faces of Syagrius and Arator were at this long drawn out. Instead of two in command there were now three. But that corresponded with Valentinian's wisdom, who sought his own power in the abasement of all governors of provinces. Before that any remark was possible, the Augustus had left the room, whilst Arator respectfully accompanied him.

"Till to-morrow, gentlemen, at the hunt," said Jetta with heightened spirits. "Poor old friend, how thou wilt puff to-morrow," she said, addressing Ausonius.

"But I also should like to join this chase," cried out Gratian, "the hunt after happiness."

Excitement made his voice more squeaky,

ti sounded almost boyishly clear, so that the others even against their will burst out in a disrespectful laugh. "Ha, thou mighty Augustus," laughed Jetta, "I thought thou hadst bestowed thy heart on Constantia."

"My father gave her what was not his. I set not the slightest importance on the connection with the old imperial house."

"State secrets and secrets of the hearts," said Jetta, smoothing out with her delicate maiden hand the folds of her dress, "must not be made public before so many witnesses, Your Grace and Serenity, and as the Emperor leaves to-day . . ." Gratian interrupted her. "My father may leave, but I remain. Why did he name me Co-regent, if I may not even hunt where I will?" Jetta shrugged her pretty shoulders and disappeared up-stairs. Rothari looked after her in dreamy delight. Even the marble steps of the stair-case seemed to glisten, where the little foot had touched the cold stone. Gratian came up quickly towards him: "I well saw the look she cast at thee. My father was very right, it was that Helen's look, which made of Paris a knave, the look which drove the Greek across the sea, the look which levelled Troja's

temples. I ask thee on thine honour, whom does she love, thee or me?"

"She spoke quite kindly of thee, quite motherly."

"Go to Styx with all mothers. But I shoot better than thee. I will show you all that I am a man." With an angry mien the youth rushed out of the house. Syagrius and Rothari measured each other with inimical cold looks and then parted.

At the door Rothari met Arator. "How shall we portion out our responsibilities?" asked the Comes. "As Father and Son," replied the German. At this the tears stood in the old man's eyes and he kissed the youth's cheeks. Rothari held out his hand heartily. "Let us make by our confidence right, what Valentinian spoils through suspicion," said he as he left the old officer deeply moved. Rothari then rode to the camp, to present himself as commander to the troops. In the evening he again sat down by the marble basin, but this day in vain. The Castalian fountain pattered as ever, but the muse came not.

To avoid a meeting with Rothari, Jetta went to the tithe farm lower down the road, in which Ausonius was wont to house, when he came to

Novus Vicus. Half angry, half amused, she wished to give her old friend a blowing up for the foolish way he had that morning acted. But when she alighted at the door of the farm, she stood there hesitating, for within might be heard the sounds of uncontrollable mourning and weeping. Curious barbaric wails from some beseeching woman smote her ear. "Barmo liabo! Kanado, mina heroro, kanado," thus they ran. This childish weeping and moaning deeply impressed Jetta, but she feared to bring about some terrible scene by entering in. She could only too well think who it was beseeching Ausonius in these tones of woe. "Erasinus, Erasinus," she heard the poet now cry. "Bring me my toga and sandals, I shall go to the camp till this woman has ceased weeping." The remainder of his words were drowned by Bissula's mournful clamors. Quickly did Jetta hide behind one of the hundred-year old chestnuts, which Roman colonists had once planted, whilst Ausonius hastened away with his page Erasinus. One could see the great poet's evil conscience even from his back view, so quickly did he hurry out of reach of Bissula's mournful throat. The abandoned German within ceased, so soon as she felt sure

that none of her sobs could find their way to her hard-hearted spouse. Jetta could not, however, induce herself to leave the poor woman thus in sorrow; she entered the court-yard. A large mastiff came growling towards her, but as Jetta showed no fear, he turned about at her commanding "down," and stretched himself out in his kennel. With a majestic bearing, as of some queen in the house of the poor, Jetta entered through the open door into the Atrium where she perceived in the gloom the mourning woman crouching against a pillar. Bissula supported her face between her hands, her fair hair hung loose down her shoulders, as she gazed about her in mute sorrow.

"Weep not, Bissula, Ausonius will not forsake thee. Thou art grieving without cause," said Jetta in a gentle voice. There was so much certainty and hearty consolation in these words, that the pretty Alemannian woman gradually roused herself from her torpor. Blue eyes red with weeping looked on Jetta, and then the tears poured down again. "Oh, noble lady," she sobbed, "she has bewitched him, he will marry her. If thou art one of the good women, or a goddess of the Romans, help me. They will sell me and he has



so often promised me that he would never part from me. He would set me free and make me his wife, he said, so truly as he is named Decimus Magnus Ausonius. And is that not his real name, and he has not in that also deceived me?"

"Be at peace, good woman, he will never marry Jetta."

"Dost thou know that for certain?" asked the German anxiously.

"I know for certain that Jetta has not bewitched him, and that she will not marry him, for I am Jetta."

Scarcely had she uttered these words than Bissula sprang up, embraced her knees and began weeping anew. "Oh, be merciful, by all the Gods . . . . give me back Ausonius . . . . I know that thou canst enchant, turn his heart again to me. He was so good, before that he wished to marry thee and praised me always for learning Latin so quickly. And he said I pronounced so well, and alas, it was so difficult to learn your language. What shall I do when he sends me away, or sells me, for he is avaricious."

"Be at peace, Bissula, be at peace. Have patience for only two days. Do not scold when he

comes back, neither do thou weep, but bear everything gently and kindly, I promise thee that by to-morrow at sun-dawn he will again swear to thee, he will marry thee, as true as he is called Decimus Magnus Ausonius, and that is his real name."

"Oh, thou art so mighty, make it turn out really so."

"But then to-night thou must neither shriek nor weep."

"Ah, that I cannot, that I cannot," now sobbed Bissula afresh. "I must tell him how badly he treated me. I have not yet told him the half of all I wish to tell him, he ran away with his horrid Erasinus. No, I will howl it out at him the whole night and every night."

"Then thou wilt lose him, I tell thee that."

"Oh, wretched woman that I am," sobbed out the German, "thou knowest not how my heart is weighed down. Oh, I am a wretched woman . . . give me a charm that I may be quiet, otherwise my heart will break."

"Good, give me a cup. Here I have already a jug. Remain here quietly till I come." Jetta went out into the viridarium, where she heard a

fountain splashing. She there filled the jug and contemplated for a while Ausonius' wonderful contrivances. Then she returned to the German woman. "Here," said she to Bissula, "as soon as the sun is quite set, do thou lie down and place this jug with holy water near thy bed. So soon as thou hearest Ausonius coming. . . .

"Shall I sprinkle him with it?"

"No, listen attentively. Immediately take a swallow of this water which keep in thy mouth and lie quite still and think to thyself over and over the name Decimus Magnus Ausonius . . . . If through any accident the water should come out of thy mouth, take immediately another swallow and think of nothing else than Decimus Magnus Ausonius. If thou dost this, on the morrow Ausonius will be thine again. But thou must not utter a word, else he will be lost to thee. Hast thou understood?"

"Yes, yes, I will do it. Didst thou also do this to take him away from me?"

"Didst thou not hear, foolish woman, that I did not wish to catch him. He is far too clever for me."

"Yes, that is he," said Bissula. "Oh, how glad I am that I no longer need to kill thee."

"Oh, so thou didst wish to kill me. That is indeed nice. How didst thou intend doing it?"

"Oh," said Bissula eagerly, "I had taken this string from my dress and strangled thee thus, see thus. We do it so at home. Thus do we twist the string, then so, and again so, then is all over. I learnt it, as I dwelt in the Marcianian wood near Tarodunum. Many a large turkey have I thus strangled, because Ausonius said that the cooks ever lose too much blood."

"I hope that thou would have first considered that I am no turkey," said Jetta smiling. "Is Ausonius hard toward thee?"

"Oh, as it happens. He is a thorough poet. At one time he beats me black and blue, at another he makes verses on me. I wish, however, to remain with him."

"Good, then do exactly as I directed thee."

"So soon as he comes, I will take a swallow of water," said Bissula eagerly.

"Well, farewell," replied Jetta, "and remember that one useless word destroys the charm. If

thou remainest silent, so art thou to-morrow free from care." On this the German sprang up, and before that Jetta was aware, covered her face with kisses, so that she was glad to escape this storm of thanks by running out into the street. "If this great child knows how to strangle unawares, as well as she does to kiss," thought she, arranging her veil, "then indeed I escaped a great danger." As she had left the house but a few yards behind her, she heard Bissula singing and caroling in the most joyous tones; she hastened on as fast as she could. "How can Ausonius stand this?" she thought. Then she paused. "Are the men of this people cleverer than the women? Rothari certainly is." And inwardly laughing at her new charm for the restoration of nuptial peace, she returned to her apartment.

## CHAPTER XII.

ON the morning of the following day five horses trotted over the wooden causeway towards the gate of the camp. Jetta's side-saddle had been buckled on to a small white pony on which proudly

sat Arator's pretty daughter. Her long white garment was fastened round her by a golden girdle, and over her hair rolled back after the model of the Diana the veil hung down in graceful folds. Behind her came the youthful Gratian with his Mentor Ausonius, the red-bearded Syagrius, and the gigantic Rothari who overtopped the other three by a head. So soon as they had passed the *porta principalis*, the soldiers hastened up from all sides and greeted Jetta with hearty cheers. Rothari noticed how Jetta enjoyed this admiration, whilst a glance in his direction seemed to apologise for its publicity. The officers gazed after the four horsemen with critical glances, alone of them all the German seemed destined by the gods worthy to become Jetta's spouse. As a consequence of this short delay the slaves caught up the cavalcade, bearing long hunting-spears and bows, and leading fierce hunting-dogs by a chain. Finally there came, hailed by the laughter of the soldiers, a half-covered carriage drawn by mules driven by a strong young wench with bluish-red cheeks in which the aged Phorkyas cowered as an owl in the shade. The procession crossed to the other side of the Nicer by the bridge of the camp, and when opposite

to the small altar of Neptune, which stood in the middle pier, Jetta hailed the god by bringing her hand to her mouth. The slaves made the signs of the cross or protected themselves against the power of the dæmon by a motion of the thumb. "We shall obtain nothing but misfortune by this hunt to-day," whispered one Christian to another. The frame of mind of the four horsemen seemed also anything but joyous. Syagrius wore his usual sarcastic expression. Ausonius gazed down the stream in the direction of the blue hills on the other side of the Rhenus, behind which lay his beloved Gallia; he breathed a heavy sigh as if something lay heavily on the heart of the plump gentleman. Rothari on the other hand gazed up the stream towards the fragrant blue mountain chain of the Wodan wood where dwelt the Alemani. This public wooing of a woman was disagreeable to him, although Jetta and the Italians did not seem to feel this. To his heavier German nature all relating to a bridal was something serious, and he felt that such a step should be veiled in the uttermost secrecy. Thus he remained silent. Gratian was, however, in a cheery mood, and entertained the beauteous leader of the party

with all the eloquence of youth. Nevertheless the morning had broken as gloriously over the valley of the Rhenus as any could wish in this lovely spring. The Nicer flowed with thousand glittering eyes shimmering among the brilliant green of the meadows. White gulls and long-necked herons hovered over the gleaming surface. Roman soldiers pulled their brilliantly painted boats across the waters, whilst the coarse canoes of the Germans fashioned out of a hollowed bark ferried down their loads to Mogontiacum. As soon as the party turned out of the outworks into the *vicus* of the Nemetes, the boys and children tumbled out to greet Jetta with their cheers, she however put her hand into the bosom fold of her dress and threw them some small coins. "May Jupiter grant thee a rich and handsome husband!" called out a small impudent boy. "And to thee a pliant rod," called back Jetta, at which the children surrounded her with re-doubled shouts. This familiarity displeased the German, he rode with a sharp turn of his bridle at the shrieking and howling mass, who sprang aside hooting at him. Gratian now rode up to Jetta's other side, and whilst riding past the wretched hovels, the young Cæsar



said eagerly: "Thou wilt be astonished as to the information I can give thee concerning each house even here. In Vicus Novus dwells beauty, mind, wealth, on this side of the bridge, however, lives a wonderful collection of people all huddled together. See this little fellow with his fat wife, standing at their open door, that is the very worthy merchant Volcius and his tender spouse Lucia Vera. He and the honest Candidius swindle the Alemanni out of their hides for two silver denarii, which they then sell us to in Rome for as many gold pieces. They also deal in apples, eiderdowns, and horse-hair, nay more even in the long fair hair of the German women. Look here, Ausonius, thou canst sell them the gorgeous locks of thy Bissula, before disposing of her altogether, and thus do a double stroke of business! Dame Lucia Vera also sells geese and her geese are as famous as the cranes of Ibycus, because they are driven all the way on foot from Tegulæ where she buys them, to Rome." Jetta smiled, and thus encouraged the youth continued his torrent of eloquence. "Here dwells a baker with two round baking ovens, who bakes the spungiest bread possible for our soldiers. Yonder lives a most amusing fellow, a priest of Cybele

driven out of Gallia. The beggar is as plump and stout as a fatted calf. The pride of his life is however a well in the middle of his room, in which he keeps his wine cool. Where he gets it from, Jupiter knows, I don't, but he swigs and guzzles the whole day. And what is most amusing, this bloated skin looks on himself as the highest representative of morality. His every other word is the bloody self-sacrifice which in his youth he offered up to the great goddess. Only when the temples of the mother of the gods are once more erected on these vine-crowned hills, and he swinging the thyrsos may crown in honour of the mother of All, his head with ivy, then only does he maintain, will morality stand on its own legs, then only can society be saved, and Rome become strong once again through bravery and virtue. I have promised to make him the high priest of all the temples of Cybele which in my time may yet exist, and around each temple will I plant a vineyard of his favourite kind."

Jetta shrugged her shoulders: "Why dost thou ridicule a priest, who holds to his belief, I do not find that praiseworthy."

"May be, but I cannot endure fat people, and

when a Gaul becomes fat, he always turns into a colossus," he added, glancing towards Ausonius. "The Eunuch has also instructed me in strategy against the Alemanni. 'One must always form a phalanx', he cried wheezing with eagerness. "With a phalanx Julian defeated the Alemanni."

"Would that we had a Julian," answered Jetta, looking towards Rothari.

"Here dwell Baucis and Philemon," continued Gratian, in no way put out by Jetta's coolness of manner. "They are now Christians and pin their entire faith on one of the holy Nereus' grinders, which they have placed over their couch. They also boast proudly, that the liturgy of their patron saint is the longest in the orthodox church."

"A pretty belief is that which you Christians cherish. Have you destroyed the images of the supreme Zeus and the divine Kypris, merely to worship decayed teeth?"

"Do not speak to me of the teeth so contemptuously. Tooth-ache is a bad thing, and you have no goddess like our St. Apollonia, who is especially beneficial to the teeth, since the judge caused hers to be pulled out as martyrdom."

"Thou art just getting thy wisdom teeth," cried Jetta with a mocking glance, "and choosest accordingly thy belief." Thus joking they had ridden along the banks of the river bordered by reeds and old willow stumps, Jetta now turned her pony round and rode up a narrow bridle-path which led to the right up a flat projection of Mons Valentiniani. Doing this they crossed the road to the watch-tower which led them to speak of the attack on the two soldiers, and Jetta asked whether war would in reality break out again. Rothari denied, Syagrius maintained this opinion, and warmly discussing the subject they reached the hill. "Here, noble lords," said Jetta, "do you now stand on my ground and property. There is the Bühl, as my slaves name the hill. Here will I build, when we live during the reign of the Emperor Gratian from the secure spears of the barbarians."

"A temple perhaps in which thou wilt officiate as priestess?" said Syagrius cynically. "Wilt thou dedicate it to 'Nicer and Rhenus', or found a collegium to the 'Roma Dea?'"

The beauteous woman cast a long cold look at the small Notarius, and then said in a

measured tone, "All they are priests who nurture the sacred flame, and keep their hands clean from iniquity. I saw in the province, as thou didst rule over Gallia, one light extinguished after the other, temples, schools, academies all went to ruin and thou didst laugh mockingly: it looked well and cost little. I hope, however, that Gratian will as pontifex be a veritable priest and guard the flame which Augustus delivered over to us and Hadrian fed." And with a bright look at the young Cæsar she turned her pony's head, and rode towards the farm in the wood, whence peeped out behind white-washed walls a row of stables and dairies with small windows and red-tiled roofs. The farmer advanced to meet her with due courtesy. That very night had the she-wolf scratched up quite close to the stables. He led the huntsmen up to a small opening in the wall, where the beast had vainly endeavoured to widen a water-conduit, and he eloquently praised his care and foresight. The wolf's spoor might plainly be traced in the soft earth up to the wood. Rothari called up the dogs. They were put on the scent and uncoupled they followed eagerly sniffing the trail of the wolf. The men dismounted and hastened with bounding

strides after the baying hounds. Jetta's small animal soon proved to be a hindrance. It was not able to pierce through into the thicket. She was compelled to follow along the edge of the wood, and ride over the clearings. The cart was unpacked and the slaves took part of the contents on their backs. Whilst the three older men hunted with the servants and dogs, Gratian did not leave Jetta's side.

The further one left the Nicer all the more distinct did the traces of the desolation of the country by the Alemanni become. An old Roman road was crossed furrowed by the rains and torrents of the spring. Further on Jetta saw with pain a sunken milestone which told the distance from Noviomagus. In another place stood a memorial tablet recording a lucky day's hunting. Weeds and moss had grown over it. Jetta sprang down from her horse to read the inscription and threw the bridle to the young Cæsar, who led her horse dutifully after her. Lightly and without a slip did her small foot tread the path strewn over with pine roots and rendered slippery by the needles of the fir-trees blown down during the winter. A gold green crepuscule and fragrant

odour of resin enveloped her. The roots of the old firs kissed by the morning sun appeared almost violet above the tender green. Following the path they came on the ruins of a burnt down Roman villa. Trees of a century's growth grew within its walls. Sadly did Jetta look down on the mosaic pavement, which the torrents of rain of this early season had laid bare. It represented a gladiatorial fight, and in the corners the heads of animals might be seen. Jetta sighed. "Promise me, Cæsar," she said to Gratian, "that thou wilt secure this land to us. Both the banks of the Rhenus must be ours from its source on Mount Adulas in Rhætia to the island of the Batavians, where it divides into the Rhenus and Vahalis."

"Stand at my side as Augusta," replied Gratian with enamoured glances, "and I am man enough to set up the boundary wall once more."

Jetta looked darkly at him. "Should Gratian require a woman's help for that, then is Rome indeed in a sorry plight," she said curtly. "I speak in earnest, Augustus!" Gratian blushed.

"Whether I can do more than Valentinian—I know not," he said modestly. "I know no greater hero than he, and yet neither he nor the divine

Julian have as yet been able to win back more than this small strip of land. Shall I defeat the Alemanni with big words?" Gratian felt for the first time a look of deeper interest directed at him from those black eyes, which made him tremble. She, however, spoke in a tone of confidence, which rendered him happy, as she approached closer to him: "As Valentinian exceeded in success the great Julian, so do thou exceed them both."

"I will," answered the boy as a tear of enthusiasm stood in his clear eye. At this moment which both would have willingly prolonged, the sounds of the hunt again were heard. Rothari's horn sounded lustily from among the bushes. The German accompanied by Jetta's dogs and servants burst out from the forest. "We seek you," he said with all a hunter's joy. "The dogs have long since lost the trail of the wolf, as well as all traces of the Notarius. May the gods preserve Ausonius the fat. I left him on the top of a round German grave, from which he knew not how to get down. Still there he gets a fine view. But in this manner, most noble lady, wild beasts are not killed. I will bring thee thy wolf, if



I may hunt alone, but it must be a stupid beast who lets itself be thus caught. It struck me often, that the Notarius was doing his best to scare the wolf, as he is then certain not to be scared himself."

"He is afraid," said Jetta drily. Rothari wiped the perspiration from his brow and asked Jetta: "What orders does our fair queen further bestow?" "First that Gratian go and immediately bring back the poor Ausonius to us. He must not let the man, to whom he owes all his wisdom, perish thus. In the mean time we seek a place suitable for a meal, and do thou gather the gentlemen and servants by the sound of thy horn, so that we may eat."

Gratian shouldered his spear and said, "I bring him to thee dead or alive, fair Diana. If he sweats, he is no longer dangerous to thy happiness. I know that." Thus saying he dived into the bushwood.

"Let us find a place for our mid-day meal, where one sits comfortably," now said Jetta to Rothari.

"What callest thou comfortably?"

"I like a wood behind me, a view before me, sun for my feet, and shade for my head."

"Then let us ride back to the edge of the wood. There thou wilt find what thou desirest."

Arrived at a clearing having the high ridge of mountains to the right, the plain to the left, they both halted and Rothari himself fastened Jetta's pony to the trunk of a beech. The slaves spread out on the ground cushions and wraps, and then brought refreshments, after which Rothari ordered them to hunt up the other gentlemen. For the first time since his offer did he find himself alone with Jetta. But with tranquil majesty the queen of the feast seemed not to be aware of this. Quite at her case she pointed backwards to Mons Valentiniani and said, "Behold how winter and spring struggle here. Above proudly towers the mountain with its ancient trees, below breaks forth on all sides the tender green of the birch and sappy beach. A prophetic imagery! Rome returns and there will be spring in the old country of the Decumates!"

"Spring will delay its coming, if days like the last repeat themselves," said Rothari dryly. "Nothing can flourish in this atmosphere of cold suspicion and icy envy.—But, beloved Jetta, I came not here to speak with thee about the De-

cumates Agri. When thou yesterday didst listen pale and enraged to Valentinian's suit in favour of Syagrius, I thought then to read in thine eye the permission to protect thee. Daughter of Arator, wilt thou grant to me what thou didst refuse to Syagrius?" Long and earnestly did the maiden gaze at him. A delicate flush arose in her cheek, and he saw how her foot trembled. But she composed herself. "Thou urgest, Rothari, and yet life is long, very long. Thou art already wearied that I ever and again speak of Rome, and yet this is the tenor of my life. I am but a woman, but I live here since the days of Julian, and all the commanders and Cæsars have heard my voice as I vowed never to rest or repose, till the smoke of the sacrifice rises once again from the Flavian altars, till at Curia and Augusta a præses of Rhætia decrees the law to the barbarians, till the boundary wall bristles with Roman lances. None less than Julian himself bequeathed me this legacy, as he parted from our house at Argentoratum. Slowly did our work proceed, but it proceeded. And I besought my father that our home might ever be with the vanguard, so as to encourage the soldiers. He wished to conceal me in

Mogontiacum, I maintained, however, that I was more in safety in the camp, and for that very cause escaped captivity, where Rando surprised us. Then proudly did we occupy Lupodunum. Therefore do I love this valley. Rhenus and Nicer were the playmates of my youth, in these valleys my heart awoke within me, and I knew what it was to be a Roman and there is none among these hills, which as witness of one of Arator's brave deeds, was not the joy of his daughter's youth. For a time they sent me to Rome, so that I might become as other women. But the shallow life, the empty talk, the pitiful aspiration of the women there sickened me, for I was accustomed to great interests. The complaints in my letters touched my father's heart, for he also missed me. I found him here, where they had again cheapened a piece of land from the Alemanni. I settled down among them, and thou seest what I have done. I know well that they make fun of me. They call me Iphigenia in Tauris, because I aspired to sacrifice myself as did Agamemnon's daughter. But more than once has Valentinian sought my counsel, and when the soldiers were discouraged my reckless daring inspired them anew. They named the

Nicer Jetta's Skamander, they mention the Iliad which I think to live out—but I will yet turn the tables against the scoffers. Yes, I will be a part of the Iliad, which is now taking place on this plain, and I know not why the brooks, which busily trickle down here from yonder mountains, should not be as good as the brooks of Homer, and this plain as good as that of Ilium." Her cheeks glowed, and a frenzy dawned in her sweet prophetic gaze. She waited that Rothari might reply, but he disconcerted by her passion remained silent, she then continued: "Dost thou feel that thou canst become a part of this Iliad, that thou wilt aid to complete this aim of my life, tell me that thou wilt live, fight and die to fulfil Julian's plans as regards this portion of the empire, if thou sayest me that, then will I give myself to thee, then am I thine." She said this almost with resignation as if she were sacrificing herself as did Agamemnon's daughter for the prosperous journey of the Grecian ships.

Rothari was moved, but his conscientious nature was opposed to owing the happiness of a life-time to a moment of pathetic emotion.

"The vow," he said with manly calm, "which

thou demandest of me I have already given to another. It was at a festival in Treveri, when a drunken Burgundian made a stab at Gratian. I thrust my hand between them and saved the boy. Enthusiast as he is, he gathered my blood in his wine cup, opened his hand and let his own run into it. At that time I took the oath of the brotherhood of blood with him and dedicated myself to Rome. I will stand or fall by your cause, however thou mayest decide. But I seek a wife, who will be mine from some other ground than that I serve Rome," he added with a slight reproof. Jetta noticed the tone of his remark. She bowed her head and said: "Our stars move harmoniously in the same course, our names give united and disjoined the same sacred number, they belong in the rote of life to the side of light."

"And hast thou no other grounds for becoming Rothari's wife?" he said sadly.

"Cruel man," she cried, "must I then tell thee in plain language what is so hard for a maiden to tell," and she stretched out her delicate white hand and looked into his face with tearful glistening eyes. "And if thy star led to the Abyssos and thy name consecrated me to the

dæmons—if thou wilt only become a Roman, I will be thine.”

On that he pressed her joyfully to his heart, and in the bliss of the hour, all the doubts disappeared, which had tormented him since their first meeting over her magic books.

Whilst the happy couple sat down in this sunny spot and gazed out in the brilliant plain, Gratian sauntered whistling and singing through the thickets. In high spirits he smote the blossoming twigs with his hunting spear, and told the birds of the joy of his young love. He could not in truth espouse Jetta, but he would love her for a very long time. That she should think so highly of him, rejoiced him to his innermost heart, and in his delight he swung himself on his spear with gigantic bounds over the brushwood, so that he soon came to the spot which Rothari had pointed out as Ausonius' retreat. On the ridge of the fore-mount, jutting out of Mons Valentiniani, was piled up at the northwest corner a grave of the Alemanni visible from afar, which concealed the bodies of many brave men, who had purchased with their lives a victory over Rome. Gratian made for this round hill, when a wonderful howling

startled him. It was like the whining of a dog or the barking of a wolf and yet seemed to be uttered by a human voice. Gratian brought his spear to the charge and went forward at the double. What a triumph if he brought in the wolf, which the proud German had not been able to slay. But the nearer he came to the source of the howling, the plainer it became to him that this proceeded from some human throat. At last the bushes divided and Gratian broke out into an inextinguishable laughter, for he saw opposite to him his worthy Mentor, who seated on the Ale-mannian grave uttered these wolf-like howls till he was red in the face.

"O Magnus Decimus," called out Gratian, "worthy preceptor of my youth, does it befit a Christian newly baptised to fill this quiet valley with such dæmoniacal howls? I must report this in my next letter to the very reverend Ithacius."

"Praise be to my patron saint," cried Ausonius joyfully, "and to Diana Abnoba the goddess of the Marcian wood; to Wodan and the genii of all the religions which I have already had and will yet have, praise be to them all, that thou camest, my worthy scholar and most illustrious Cæsar. I began



to fear that you would be godless enough to let my body lie here amidst the sinful remains of the blind heathen after suffering thousand pangs of hunger, which I of all, as thou knowest, ever most avoided. Come, excellent youth, and help me down, for my legs are short and my body heavy from the weight of years."

"First tell me, why thou didst not call out like a man, but howled like a whipped cur?"

"Strategy of war, most illustrious; I knew that you followed after the brute creation more eagerly than after your fellow-man in distress. I therefore played the wolf, to attract you hither. I also thought thereby to frighten the greedy beasts, who would have finished by eating alive the immortal poet of the Mosella."

"Listen, very honorable, they were exceedingly unchristian noises, and I fear much, that since my education is completed, thou hast again returned to the frivolities of thy youth, when thou didst indite thy Cento nuptialis, the only one of thy poems, which thou ever hiddest from me, which I, however, therefore know more thoroughly than any other. Shall I repeat it to thee here to thy disgrace?"

"Do not insult the ears of the chaste Diana, my beloved scholar, and forget these sins of my unripe youth."

"But thou art once more making love, old rascal, and heedest not the tears of thy fair Bis-sula, who in any case was much too good for thee."

"I pray thee, Cæsar, let us drop that and help me down."

"Not before that thou hast sworn to cancel thy suit for Jetta."

"Be reasonable and help me, my dear boy. Recall but the miserable exercises of thine which I had to correct for so many years, before that thou couldst adopt thy present beauteous style, which no other Gallic rhetor could have taught thee."

"I am only astonished how thou couldst roll up there, my round master."

"The cunning Rothari pulled me up and then with one spring dived into the bushes. I spoiled his hunt, he said, but he only wished to be alone with Jetta."

"By Hercules, thou mayest be right, and he has been sitting side by side with her for the last hour while we have been chattering; come, hold on to

my spear. Now step forward. Woolsack, thou squeezest me to death—There—now he rolls among the grass."

"Bruised man that I am," groaned Ausonius, "all my bones ache."

"Serves thee perfectly right, and this pleasure wouldst thou daily have as Jetta's husband, if thou didst not wish, that thy legal wife went trotting through bushes and woods alone with other huntsmen. This Silenus, Diana's husband! It makes one laugh. Now come, I will lead thee."

As after an hour's happiness Rothari's sharp ear caught the sound of the approach of the hunters he dropped Jetta's hand. Once again did they look into each other eyes with the loving confusion of a young love which for the first time has sipped from the sweet cup. Then Jetta quickly told him that it was her intention to induce Ausonius to retract his suit of his own free will, and not to embitter Syagrius still more. Both had her father earnestly laid her to heart. "Here lies the instrument of the reconciliation of one," she said, pointing to a roll of Ausonius' poems. "Syagrius will, I hope, not return. Perhaps he is already thinking of some other who also has small hands

and ears. For these he always looks out, has he told my cousins. My innermost life was ever a joke to him. Enthusiasm is always ridiculous to him who never feels it. Even the fear of the gods appears foolish to him who believes not in gods, and so is it with the love for father, Rome, humanity. Only to look out for oneself, that Syagrius calls common-sense." A blush of disgust coloured Jetta's cheek as she spoke. Nevertheless she broke off, as Gratian appeared dragging after him the panting Ausonius.

No long time elapsed before that the entire company lay down by the sunny edge of the wood. Alone the Notarius remained missing. "So much the better," said Jetta. "He has the special gift of disenchanting the world around one with his sneering remarks. But we here are all enthusiasts and can remain good friends." And with a graceful movement she invited the three men to partake of her rural feast. The servants and dogs gathered at a short distance and even the old Phorkyas and her companion found themselves admitted. Jetta sat with the two warriors on a small elevation from which she could look down on the blue plain intersected by the Nicer and Rhenus. But Gratian

turned his back to scenery and sky and stretchep out on the grass he supported his head between his hands and gazed like a faithful dog fixedly up into Jetta's eyes. Rothari laid his spear across his knee and offered the viands around, which a servant carried. The portly poet set to work with the heartiest good-will at the wine and rich provisions. "Hunger," he wisely remarked, "is a sickness, which may be cured through feeding." After that he once more wiped the sweat from his fat face and with his small kindly eyes looked out at the Nicer and Rhenus. "Here, Rothari," he said in a magisterial tone, "canst thou see the deviation from the natural bed of the river which Valentinian undertook, so as to preserve the muni-mentum from the under-wash, as the waters of the Nicer endangered our work. Dost thou see there, how the river diverges in a straight line from its course, that is the new bed which our soldiers dug out. It was no easy work to dam up the old opening by loaded cases and sluices, and thus force the current into its new track. For several days the soldiers stood up to their necks in water, and it seemed, as if the old river-god raged at our pointing ways to him other

than those which he had traced out. It helped him not, we Romans cast the barbarian out of his bed. But thou must read Symmachus' speech, which rolls out like a river in full periods and well-measured proud cadences: "Nicer," thus speaks he in similar strain, "to prove itself dutiful makes room and Rhenus has turned aside, so that we may thereby the more believe, that even the rivers of Germany are subservient to Cæsar. As we now have received the Nicer as pledge, so need we the less wonder that kings have offered thee their children for alliances conceded. Even the Rhenus, that I speak so, would not have been able to rejoice in peace with Rome, had he not delivered up as hostage the river united to him." The German smiled quietly to himself. He thought of Macrian's son once held as hostage, but since escaped. Ausonius, however, continued to his own satisfaction, "The day is clear, I plainly see the slender turrets on the walls of Alta Ripa, its inclined forts, and trenches. The cupola of the palace glistens like the sun."

"I hope that my father will live to see the town completed," said Jetta with a low sigh. "When we have set up the columns, on the Forum

which lie half finished on the Melibocus, as a memorial of our victories, then must you all gather there, as I consider Valentinian's day of honour as mine own."

"We do not intend leaving here, fair Bellona," said Gratian contentedly, as he comfortably supported on his arm gazed at her.

"How beautiful are the dark green shadows of the river," said Jetta evasively, "and the silver gleam, which lies yonder, where the sun-beam dances over it. Does it not remind one of Ausonius' Dance of the Nymphs at mid-day, who through this gleam dazzle every mortal eye so that it may not spy their sports. I have brought the book with me," she added, looking at the plump poet with a beauteous sunny smile, so that the heart of the latter began to melt in his breast. "If you like, I shall read it to you. I find that what my friend wrote in the town of the Treveri about the Mosella applies to my Nicer." Ausonius looked gratefully at the beauteous muse and a satisfied smile played over his shining visage. Bissula's tears which had tortured him the whole morning were now forgotten.

"We pray for it," cried Rothari and Gratian,

and the boy added blushing: "Thy deep voice is ever to me like a prayer in the temple."

Jetta lightly passed the roll over his cheeks, opened the book and began to read.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Over the rushing Naha<sup>1</sup> deckt in the morning mist  
I came and proudly beheld Vincum's<sup>2</sup> new walls.  
Then treading my solitary way through wood and waste  
In vain I sought around me the trace of human cultivation.  
Through Dumnissus,<sup>3</sup> the arid, with landscape around me torrid  
Did I hurry, where slavish serfs ploughed up the ground.  
Noviomagus<sup>4</sup> also at last in the foremost land of the Belgæ  
I saw, the glorious citadel of Constantinus the divine.  
Purer is here in the fields the air, and Phœbus sends not  
Through the boughs of the wood a twilight broken and green,  
But to gaze on the shining light he gives to the eye rejoicing,  
Like to the image and pride of Burdigala,<sup>5</sup> of my resplendent  
Home, did the pure ingratiating image touch me to the heart.  
Here numerous villas built on banks sloping and sunny,

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<sup>1</sup> Nahe.

<sup>2</sup> Bingen.

<sup>3</sup> Hunsrück.

<sup>4</sup> Neumagen.

<sup>5</sup> Bordeaux.



There the heights of the Liber verdant with vines, between  
Flowing with murmuring course the light gliding Mosel.  
Hail to thee, o stream, pleasant to fields and labourers  
To whom the Belgæ own the city worthy of the throne,  
Stream, whose hills around are planted with the fragrant Bacchus,  
Stream with the gorgeous edge girt by the green grown banks,  
Navigable like to the sea. Where downwards hurry thy waters  
Thou bearest the tossing skiff, whilst oars smite thy waves,  
Against thy stream with tightened rope tows the sailor his boat,  
Astonished thyself as to whether the foaming white trail  
Stemmed with labour intends to follow thine own track.  
Beauteous river, thee surrounds not the moor-begotten reed,  
Nor lazily dost cover with slime disgusting the bank;  
Clean does the foot reach even to the foremost wave.  
Here glitters the corny sand on the light-washed beach  
And behind remains no form of the imprinting foot.  
Through the glass of thy waters shows thy crystal depth,  
How the sand curls around, furrowed by gentle movements,  
How the grasses bowed tremble on thy green bottom  
And how yellow chalk and the pebbles glitter below.  
Such sights know well the caledonian Britons,  
When the ebbing sea lays bare the greenish sea-grass,  
Red corals and clear glistening pearls embedded in shells."

Thus read Jetta; nor did she forget the catalogue of all edible fishes about which Ausonius had taken the greatest trouble. Jokingly did she

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<sup>1</sup> Trier.

The above is an extract from Ausonius' beauteous Idyl. We refer to Böcking's faithful translation (Author's note).

glance at the poet, as she read the savoury hexameter:

"I praise thee also, O Salmon, with the ruddy shimmering flesh."

"My mouth waters," said Gratian laughing. But Jetta continued:

"And the trout, with backs sprinkled with purple stars."

After the fish came the panegyric of the grapes, which grow on the hills of the lauded river, and then a comparison drawn by the author between the wines of the Mosella and those of Burdigala.

"There the wanderer

Striding along the flat coast, and in skiff gliding the sailor  
Singing to the tardy vintagers a song abusive, which loudly  
returns

The sounding rock, both the whispering wood and the swelling  
stream.

But not man alone delights the landscape the beauteous  
Legends tell, how when gleams in mid-sky the sun  
Satyrs then, in the familiar stream and the nixes the greenish  
Together join in the dance, while a few hours are granted  
By the glowing heat, now not disturbed by the throng of man;  
Then hop and spring the nymphs in the wave of the waters  
Splashing the satyr's head, and out of the clumsy swimmer's  
Hands they slip, who deceived at the smooth  
Busts found around but pure lymph for women.  
But to me is allowed, what none has seen, nor beholding known  
Only in part to relate. Let veiled up in the stream  
Remain to us preserved the secret to the poet entrusted

Jetta read in her melodious voice the praise likewise of the villas, built on the dam of the bank or on the heights of the vine covered hills, which project their fundamentals even into the river and whose halls are reflected in the waters, whilst the bath with smoking chimney invite to the use of the bath-rooms. But finally the course of the verses, like that of the Mosella approached its end.

Then the beauteous reader let the book sink and gracefully rolled it up with her delicate white hands. "Thanks, thanks!" cried the men. "Never did Ausonius' verses appear so beautiful to me," added Gratian with a passionate glance at Jetta.

"Thus as here depicted by our friend," said the maiden, "did it look before the Alemanni came even on the Nicer. See to it, my Lords, that a similar song lauds this valley, when our urns are placed in the columbarium at Rosenhof. For that let us live and die!" and she stretched out her hands to the two friends seated next to her, whilst kindly nodding to Ausonius. "But dost thou know what displeases me in thy poem?" she said, addressing the poet. "That is in the beginning the contemptuous description of the forest with its cross-bars

of thickly entwined branches. He who will be my husband," she added with a sly smile, "must love the woods, and war, and the chase, for I belong to the race of Amazons." Ausonius sighed and felt his bruised limbs anew. "Love the wood," he said crossly. "What Roman who knows Varus' fate can love the woods of Germania. Was not even the brave Severus himself, as he forced his way into the depths of these woods northwards from the lake of the Veneti, so overcome by terror at the sight of these labyrinths, that he bribed the guides to state, that they had lost the tracks, so by this means to be able to turn out of the horrors of this wilderness with a plausible excuse, and how his heart bounded within him as he again beheld the blue sea, and the beloved sun and snow of the Rhætian Alps. I am not better than Constantius' bravest commander. When I behold all round me this awful wood, these darksome shades, hear the firs rustle, the storm raging in the distance, whilst the sun scarcely sends a ray to lighten the green twilight, then I feel like a child in the dark. Not only does my armour rust in this land of fog, but my courage also. Where the sun only half shines, am I only half Ausonius." Rothari laughed

at this open admission of the brave Roman, but as the latter frowned, he added good-naturedly: "Noble Jetta, I think that thou hast withheld from us the most beautiful verses of our friend,

"As thou didst wish, O Paulus, hast thou here all the verses  
to Bissula

Which in praise of my Suevian maiden I joyously made?"

asked Jetta jestingly.

"Here sing we Bissula, but first do thou drink."

"*Ante bibas!*" cried Gratian, and poured out a full beaker for Rothari, whilst Ausonius' face darkened. But Jetta mercilessly continued:

"Bissula, born and bred on the other bank of the frosty Rhine,  
Bissula, thou who didst blossom near the source of the Danube,  
Once prisoner in war is now a conqueror in love,  
High delight of him whose booty she became.

Roman through the bonds of love, she remains German,  
The eye ever blue, the hair ever fair,  
Twofold dost thou now appear, for adorns thee with doubled  
grace

Latium's speech the mind, Suevian charm the figure."

"Sweet jewel!" remarked Gratian jestingly.

"Bliss and love and song and only joy,  
Who as barbarian conquers the throng of Roman maidens,  
Bissula, rustic sounds thy name, thou daughter of Germania,  
The Romans thinks the word wonderful, but it tickles my ear."

"That is the best of his poems! As Bissula's singer he will live, even when his Mosella has been long forgotten," said the youth pathetically.

"To the health of Bissula's husband!" cried Jetta and the cups were filled and emptied to the dregs.

"He has drunk with us!" cried Gratian. "He retires from the list of suitors."

"Then didst thou well, my friend," cried Jetta, giving her fair hand to Ausonius. "What would posterity have said when told: thus did he sing of the lovely Bissula, and then ran after a rich maiden, who as a just punishment worried him to death. Ausonius, think of thine ease, think of posterity! Thou art a cheerful follower of Epicurus, and as thy comfort is so dear to thee, thou shouldst not join thyself to such a whirlwind as Jetta."

Ausonius remained silent, but he thought over how he had already been worried on this one day. Nevertheless as a statesman it behoved him to dally with his retreat. "This is indeed a complete conspiracy, gentlemen," he said puffing. "Yet, I must acknowledge that the whole morning my heart has been heavy thinking over Bissula's grief. Yesterday, so long as she scolded and raged, I

felt no pity. I returned to my home from which her cries had driven me, with firm determination to send her out of the house at the first scene she made. But she lay quiet in her little bed and uttered not a word. This silent grief, I must own, affected me deeply. Many a time did I fear, that she had taken poison, as she had a pitcher near her, out of which she drank every time the sobbing was about to break forth. When I awoke this morning, she was still asleep, but she looked so charming in her sorrow, that I could hardly restrain myself from embracing her and begging her to forgive my cruelty."

"Thus do I love thee, my friend, thou art not only a great poet but also a good man. I shall weave for thee a laurel wreath from out of my own garden on the occasion of the next poem thou inditest to Bissula, and thou knowest how niggard I am of my laurel. But now let not the poor little maiden grieve longer. Phorkyas!" she clapped her hands, "let the cart be made ready. Ausonius will drive, I follow on horseback. You must return on foot."

They broke up. Jetta mounted her horse. Ausonius went down with the servants towards

the cart. Rothari and Gratian walked along the woodland path near Jetta's pony, and the men looked with admiration at the slender figure, who at one time bent with practised hand a twig to one side, or stooped with easy motion to avoid a branch.

"We have got rid of Syagrius and Ausonius," whispered Gratian to the German. "The choice remains between us both, and that thou mayest see how earnestly I look upon our bond, I also retire. Let Jetta be thine."

Rothari was about to reply with a joke. But when he saw that a tear hung on Gratian's lids, he tenderly smoothed the boy's close-cropped hair and said: "My good faithful Gratian!" Without a word they strode through the paths, Jetta some way ahead on her impatient little palfrey when suddenly the beast began to snort, his mane stood up, and he backed a few paces. At the same instant Jetta saw in front of her the wolf in the middle of the path. The beast had dug its claws in a dead deer which was too heavy for it to carry off, but the green gleam in the brute's eye showed that it felt in no way inclined to surrender its prey. Jetta's pony threw up its head



and with wide opened nostrils gathered itself together to receive the wolf's spring. But Rothari's sharp eye had noticed from the horse's start that some hindrance must be in the way. He quickly sprang up the incline to see what it was. The sight before him filled him with horror and admiration. Whilst the hand of the rider encouraged by patting the shying horse, her flaming look was sufficient to tame the wolf. The beast showed its white teeth, but dared make no step forwards. Again Rothari had a proof of the magic power of this woman skilled in enchantments. The brute stood as if fascinated before the defenceless maiden, and the German could tell the moment, in which this cowardly foe would leave snarling his booty behind him, driven to flight by the glance of this flaming eye. He did not wish to rob Jetta of her victory. He was content to poise his hunting spear, ready to fell the brute the moment it turned. But in the mean time Gratian trembling with excitement had seized his bow. He aimed and skilful as ever hit his mark, but the calm necessary to impart the full strength to the arrow was wanting. The point stuck in the shoulder-blade of the wolf, which enraged sprang towards the horse, the latter

stood up on his hind legs and struck at the wolf's skull with his forehoof. Both the men sprang forward. Gratian caught Jetta, who cleverly had slid off the rearing horse. Rothari pursued the wolf with one bound and disappeared after it in the thicket.

"Hear, my Cæsar," said Jetta in her calm deep voice to Gratian, "thy arrows hit, but only scratch. That may be dangerous for thy friends."

"Thou art right," answered Gratian ashamed. "Even thy horse defended thee more cleverly than I. I had done better to content myself with looking on as did the German."

"Rothari's confidence makes me proud. He knew that I required no help."

At this instant Rothari's horn sounded close at hand. He was evidently to be found among the nearest bushes. Jetta left her horse with the servants who had hurried forward and went with steady step over the mossy stones, through ferns and brake following the sound together with Gratian, who did not appear to rejoice in the music. Near a high pile of rock, surrounded by grass and intervening bushes, they found the German holding a wriggling young wolf-cub by the scruff of its neck

and muzzling his mouth with one of his hunting straps. After that he had thus rendered the small foe innocuous, he fastened the second strap as a collar round his neck, while at the same time he endeavoured to quiet the frightened creature by kindly pats and caresses. On approaching closer, Jetta saw the wolf lying dead on the ground with a gaping bleeding wound straight in its side. Three cubs lay dead around. "One has escaped me," said Rothari laughing. "Such a hunt as this deserves no better."

"Where didst thou discover the hole?" asked Jetta. Rothari bent back some twigs in front of the rock, so that the entrance to a cavern became visible. Gratian crept in to see what might be picked up. The entrance was low and completely covered up by hanging branches and roots. Inside, however, the cavern was more roomy. Human aid had helped in this. It must have served as hiding-place for many a fugitive from German or Roman, before that the wolf had adopted to its own use the abandoned asylum. The pungent odour, however, quickly drove the young Cæsar back to the open air. "I have found nothing but this spoil," he said, laying a hen's wing at Jetta's feet.

"Of my pet hen," cried Jetta mournfully. "Poor murdered Galla, now wouldst thou have had peace from thine enemies!" She plucked out a feather and then threw the wing away. Rothari's horn now summoned the slaves who in joyous astonishment stood around the slaughtered booty. The fortune of the hunt makes friends of masters and servants. The slaves examined the wolf's mouth and measured her length, they praised Rothari's certain aim, and played with the little prisoner. Finally they loaded up their booty. The one took the huge brute on his shoulders, the other slung the three dead cubs like so many hares across his back, a third dragged away the deer, from which Jetta had frightened the wolf. Then laughing did they wish to catch hold of the cub, but the little beast snapped at their fingers with its sharp teeth. "When will Romans and Gauls learn how to handle animals," said Rothari smiling, as with two fingers he tickled the cub's neck and ears. The little beast was at once quiet, rubbed against Rothari's legs and gratefully licked his hands. After that he had shown one of the men how the cub must be carried and quieted by stroking, the servant passed on in front, whilst

Jetta made ready to re-mount her horse. Rothari, however, boldly seized the slender form and placed her with steady hand upon the saddle. The maiden smiling suffered him to do this, and her cheek lightly touched that of the German as he raised her, he next handed her the reins, and tenderly smoothed out the folds of her garment. Gratian turned pale. "Have they already gone as far as this," he thought, and in bitter anger at the foolish role which he himself played, he remained tarrying behind the other two, who joyfully amused themselves in talking about the rearing of the cub, which Rothari promised to tame for his mistress. After a while Jetta pulled up her horse. She must have had a presentiment of what was going on in Gratian's heart, and to appease him, she begged Rothari to wait, so that he should not be lost as were Syagrius and Ausonius. Whilst they were thus standing and looking back, something whizzed through the air. A hiss and thud followed; in the beech near which Rothari stood, stuck an arrow quivering. "That was meant for me," said the German. "The missile flew quite close to my face." He looked sharply in the direction from which the shot had come, but nothing stirred.

Jetta bent down from her horse towards the beech and pulled the arrow out of the trunk. At that moment Gratian turned the corner and Jetta handed him the arrow. "Thy friend has just been shot at," she said, pale with fright. Gratian also lost all colour as he hastily grasped the offered arrow. The point was small but sharp and enclosed in copper. The barb was a heron's feather, the wood hard, of polished cherry.

"It is of Roman workmanship," said Rothari. "No German shoots with such a plaything."

"Would that the dogs were here, that we might track down the scoundrel," cried Gratian.

"But no Roman ever polished this iron. It may come from Damascus or Antioch. Take care, the point is poisoned. By Hercules, where have I seen such arrows."

"It is one of Syagrius'," said Jetta sadly. Rothari broke laughing the arrow in two and threw the pieces into the bush. "Thus get thee gone, Syagrius' revenge!" Gratian shook his head. "The Greek does not act in such a cowardly way; besides I looked over his quiver. His arrows are reeds filled in."

"Hold Jetta's horse," said Rothari suddenly. "Yon bush moves, perhaps I may yet trap the hidden bowman."

Silent and sorrowful sat Jetta on her palfrey, who stood quiet and terrified, whilst Gratian held him by the bit and patted his neck. "Why dost thou believe Syagrius capable of so much wickedness?" he at last asked his fair companion.

"I believe him capable of anything," said Jetta in an outburst of excitement, "he will yet betray Rome. When a man considers enthusiasm laughable, there is then nothing left. A man is then capable of everything, because he believes nothing."

Gratian looked thoughtful. "The Notarius is perhaps not originator of the winged missile," said he at last, "but the authoriser. In that thou mayest be right." Jetta also was lost in thought. But she shook off the painful phantasies. "Who knows," she said consoling herself, "perhaps the whole affair may be explained away."

After a while Rothari returned. He had found no one but the aged Phorkyas who had not gone on with the other servants. More than ever had she given him the impression of being crazy. She

now followed after the horse and its two guides, but was soon lost again in the bushes. Jetta kept unceasingly looking around and about her as if fearing a second attack, but Rothari quieted her.

"Let us not talk about this, but keep our eyes open."

"Thou shouldst not have thrown the arrow away," said Jetta.

"To shoot sparrows it might do," replied Rothari, "but arrows to kill men look different."

Shortly before arriving at the camp they came upon the slaves who had led up thither the horses from the Buhl, and whilst Gratian and Rothari were mounting, they saw Syagrius returning from the wood. "Why didst thou abandon us so early," asked Rothari, in order to prove to Jetta that he in no way shared her suspicions. The Notarius turned up his Roman nose proudly towards the sky. "Others," he said haughtily, "are better suited to run after a stolen hen, than is the Emperor's Notarius."

"In that art thou right," answered Rothari coldly. "If one, however, has once set off in pursuit of a stolen hen, one must not return without the thief, if it were but to show that even in



the wood one does not miss one's aim." So saying he set spurs to his horse and galloped after Jetta. Even he was now inclined to look on the Greek as the ambushed bowman.

## CHAPTER XIV.

RETAINED prisoner by these beautiful eyes Rothari had given up his intended visit to Rome and bidden farewell to all idea of a return to the halls of his ancestors. In sweet communion did he live here close to Jetta and rich by inheritance and war he determined to found for himself a home in some sure spot between Nicer and Rhenus, whose mistress Jetta promised to be. It seemed to them as if they had known each other for many years, as the inclinations of their hearts, the recollection of a danger gone through together and the secret of that arrow encircled them with a threefold band. Thus passed their days in the richly-blossoming garden, as if they lived on the island of the Blessed. Gratian's boyish passion was a subject for their jokes and united teaching besides that they had a mutual pupil in the young

wolf, who attached itself with as much affection to Jetta as it showed for Rothari, and when Jetta let the beast spring up at her, scratched its neck, stuck her hand in its sharply toothed mouth, Rothari made of her an exception to his rule, that none but Germans understood how to handle animals. Arator could not conceal from himself the fact that Jetta and the German were inwardly in accord. The fear that Syagrius might renew his suit struggled within him with his disinclination to marrying his only child to a barbarian, whilst Rothari in the simplicity of his heart looked upon everything as definitely arranged. Either the German considered his application to Valentinian in Arator's presence as sufficient, or he had laid an importance on the declaration that Arator and he would divide the command as father and son, which the proud old man had not intended. Jetta also was silent, but her whole manner bore the impress of a joyful determination. Finally the father himself was obliged to speak the first word and to declare to her that it was in no way his wish that she should give her hand in marriage to a barbarian; he sought a son-in-law in the palaces of Rome. But Jetta treated his opposition

as of no importance. He would soon give way, she said smilingly to him, when he knew Rothari better, the beloved of gods and men. "Does Arator believe that his daughter would give herself to a barbarian?" she asked with flashing eyes. "Thou canst turn Rome's palaces upside down, before that thou findest a Roman to equal him."

"Do, as thy obstinacy impels thee," replied the father sorrowful. "I see nothing good come from such an union. Rothari will struggle a while to cast aside the barbarian, but I never saw a man die a Roman, who had not been born a Roman. Sooner or later will the Alemann peel off the strange skin, and then thou art homeless. But I am not the sort of man capable of living at enmity with his only child. May thy path be clearer than I see it. If it must happen, then hasten, for my days are numbered." His generous admiration of Rothari's soldier nature rendered the sacrifice which he was about to make easier, but he was determined on loosening these marriage bonds, even if necessary by blood and iron, should ever the Alemann betray his child.

It was very natural that Jetta should insist that the wedding should be celebrated strictly

according to Roman rites, and Rothari's desire to become a thorough Roman met this proposition half way. One of the consequences of this was that the nuptials could not be solemnized before the fifteenth of June, the feast of the purification of the temple of Vesta. Even if Rothari did not see what his marriage had to do with the temple of Vesta, he nevertheless had to admit that some time was necessary to put in order the villa which Arator intended to be the habitation of his son-in-law. The villa was situated on the south-western slope of Mons Piri so that Rothari might ever have under his supervision the watch-tower committed to his care, together with the camp. Its bright walls surrounded by numerous floral ornamentations, gleamed kindly on the plain below. It was not clear to Rothari why the house had always stood empty. The villa, it was said, had been set aside for receptions, the Emperor wished to occupy it, the officers had made use of it. Jetta begged him not to look over it, so as not to destroy her joy at his surprise. At his entreaty, however, she climbed up with him one mid-day the steps of the terraces, which glowed from the heat of the summer-sun. With delight did the

German proceed along the gravel-walk, between well trimmed hedges and beds of flowers, and gaze with pleasure at the open exposure, behind him the green-wooded valley, before him the fertile plain. But the house itself he must not inspect. It did not behove her to cross the threshold, over which she must be carried as bride, said Jetta, seating herself on the steps of the area whilst Rothari wandered about the richly adorned vestibulum. With admiration did the Alemann examine the reflecting mosaic pavements and variegated walls of the small room. In the viridarium bloomed rare ever-greens. Gently pattered the fountain in the Atrium, into which he after a cursory inspection returned with yearning heart. Here was indeed the home of his future happiness, here was the thalamos to be erected on the day of his nuptials, here should once the Domina rule over the spinning maidens. With anxious joy did his eye wander from the well white-washed pillars to the costly implements and the artistically enclosed impluvium, and then his gaze returned to the gay masks and fruit pieces of the mosaic floors, which lay gleaming under his feet. But the Alemann could not conceal from himself that it was no thought of

pure delight, which filled his mind at the idea of housing here. He felt himself to be awkward in these low gaudy rooms, the side chambers felt stifling, and the gigantic man crossed even the most spacious apartments in a few strides. He feared to completely crush under his immense weight the artistically carved chairs and benches. He did not know what to do with himself in the midst of all this splendour.

Up till then Rothari had wished to live as a Roman, and even that day for a moment had it appeared to him a proud thought to be lord over this resplendent house. But now the brown halls of his ancestors rose before his eyes, where his mother mildly but firmly directed from her lofty seat with her clear blue eyes the servants and men, and he thought how would Jetta behave in such surroundings? In any case better than he would in these, he said to himself. It was as the awaking of some law of nature, the feeling that he was not comfortable under such circumstances. He longed for the brown block-house of the Alemani, and the smiling shepherds on the frescoes, and the grinning fawns gazing up at him from the floors became distasteful to him. Whilst look-

ing about him with such strangely adverse feelings, the heavy curtains of a room to the left attracted his attention. He drew it aside and entered into an empty vacant passage which led up to a well secured door ornamented with curious signs. In vain he endeavoured to open the door. A whistling wind blew through the creaks, as if the door opened on some deep abyss. On applying his ear he heard the wind howling as through some rocky gorge. The measured fall of drops broke rhythmically upon the monotonous sighing of the draught, and in the distance the wind sounded like the roaring of a tempest. Through the key-hole he looked into a dark room, from which an icy cold breeze blew over him. "Dark and cold like the path to Niflheim!" he said. A disagreeable sensation came over him. He felt himself not to be alone with his happiness, if here was concealed an entrance to the sanctuary of his home. The thought was so unpleasant that he climbed up to the flat roof to see what sort of room it was, that was thus locked up. But he could only see that a passage existed between the house and the adjoining rock, and could not explain to himself the purpose of the square window-

less building. As he bent forward to examine this better, Jetta called up to ask how much longer she should wait for him. They thus exchanged jokes up and down, till Jetta seriously requested him to descend. But again passing the doorway his eye returned to the mystic portal. "I shall wall it up," he said to himself, "so soon as I am master here." He then closed up the house and examined with his arm round Jetta the southern plants in the garden. As he looked back on the walk, it seemed less beautiful than before. The heavy tread of the soldier had left deep marks in the soft sand. "Jetta, Jetta," he said, pointing to the damage he had brought about, "thy giant destroys thy coloured walks, and the frost giant will slay thy laurels sacred to Apollo."

"Oh woe is me, my giant," she answered, "how shall I be able to endure this?"

"Thou hast tamed thine own," he said, and she smilingly permitted his embrace.

Thus among such happiness and delight was even waiting and hoping sweet.

The only impediment in the flower-strewn path of his love-life was for Rothari Jetta's relations



with the young Romans in the camp, among whom those most immediately connected with Arator's household, Staius and Nasica were the least agreeable to the German. These pampered, scented beaux appeared to the German more like eunuchs than soldiers. In his eyes they had all the faults of women added to the vices of men. The greatest recollections of Rome seemed in them to consist in high strung phrases and in antique drapery. They wore their military cloaks as togas and declaimed against the barbarians as did Cicero against Catilina. To the straightforward German all this affectation of romanism was but wind and puff, and he wondered much that Jetta in the innocence of her heart believed in this blatant patriotism. He was rather pleased than annoyed at the fact of these cousins looking on his marriage with Jetta scornfully, but much the more did he now strive to prove in the fitting up of his house, that he also was rich through the favour of Cæsar and the fortune of war. Arator was, however, more concerned by the strained relations of Rothari with his nephews, and as the day of espousals approached, he made a request which in a measure was intended to smooth down this misapprehension.

"Thou canst understand," he said in an earnest solicitous tone, "that I should like to see the man who espouses my daughter honoured and loved in our camp. I should wish brethren to defend his honour when he is absent, watch over his safety, when he himself cannot do so, and that every one should know that this man's blood is costly, for it would be avenged. Thou art a stranger amongst us, and no relation stands at thy side. But this want can find a substitute. Hadst thou been a Christian thou hadst found such in thy church. But even for us servants of the ancient gods there is a secret mighty band, which secures with sacred oath the leaders of the forces, which maintains union in the army in these times of decay, a cement which binds more securely than blood." Rothari made a motion with his hand as if to say, do not continue. The Comes looked astonished and gave a private sign. Rothari stretched out two fingers. "Then we are already brethren," cried Arator joyfully.

"A raven am I"—

"Honour the father," replied the Comes, and Rothari bowed his head and said: "I honour the father."

"That is right," answered Arator. "All the initiated will rejoice that thou art one of us. But it is necessary that thou assumest the next higher degree here in our grotto, that the brethren may be convinced of thy courage."

"For that the field of battle was ever the place," answered Rothari in astonishment.

"Thou must take the warriors of to-day as they are," rejoined Arator carelessly. "What is natural astonishes them no longer, only the power to endure exquisite tortures is able to convince them, and here decrees a man's worth."

"Then I will be a boy among boys," replied Rothari smiling. "I will hunger and thirst, I will lie down on sharp shells or pointed thorns, they can flog me or stretch me on the martyr's block, I will lie in the Nicer in the most painful position, let daggers flash before my eyes, go through fire and water, swim so long as I can retain my breath, or any other childish probations which the servants of Mithras usually delight in to make proof of a man's courage. But what incites me, are not these bloody proofs, but that thou, O my father, liftest another bit of veil from those mysterious symbols, which some years ago were

exhibited before me but at a distance, as if in jealousy."

"Good, my son," rejoined Arator. "The god of the rocks accepts thee once more. Thou wilt receive the warrior's degree and I shall impart to thee the necessary wisdom. Art thou ready to undergo the probation at any hour which may be pleasing to the fathers?"

"Ready by night and by day."

"Remember those words to fulfil them," said Arator significantly.

"Willingly," replied Rothari, "and where is the Cave of Mithras that awaits me?"

"That remains concealed from thee, till the god summons thee."

The Alemann bowed his head, and Arator left him well-pleased.

## CHAPTER XV.

Finally the sun had sunk for the last time and the night had arrived which separated our hero from the completion of all his hopes. Jetta sat thoughtfully in the villa of the Comes in her

maiden room and laid on one side the magic books, which she had once more consulted as to the future. Bissula busied in making ready the the red nuptial veil sat at her feet and near her stood the pale delicate-looking matron, Fulvia, wife of the insane centurion on the Rosenhof, who had accompanied Jetta as friend since her mother's death. But at that moment Jetta did not look like some happy bride. "Will they all remain away?" she asked her older friend with an expression of mingled scorn and shame. "Thou knowest, dearest Jetta," said the other, "how much they fear the bishop. He preached in the basilica on the text, 'You cannot approach the Lord's table and the devil's table.' The consequence was that all the women concluded to remain away from those heathen ceremonies."

"If their priests are more to them than their friends they may go. But I shall always remember, who alone of all the women braved the ban of the mighty." And she put her arms round the pale woman's neck and kissed her passionately. "But why comes Justina not? As a rule she does not heed much the bishop's wrath?" Fulvia shrugged her shoulders.

"I can tell thee that," burst out Bissula suddenly. "Thou knowest the silly tale of the Emperor's lost helmet."

Fulvia frowned at her, but Bissula's torrent of words was no longer to be stemmed. "Since Valentinian suffered his helmet to be captured by a German, Justina firmly believes that the Empire will once again fall to a barbarian as it did to Maximinus the Thracian, or Philip the Arabian, but this time to an Alemann. Valentinian must also have dreamt something of the kind."

"But what has this to do with my marriage?" asked Jetta in astonishment.

"That is just it, she thinks". . . .

"Be still with this foolish talk," said Fulvia angrily, "let the fools who waste their time in camp, tell these fables. A lost helmet means a lost helmet and not a new Emperor."

Jetta remained silent. After a while she said dreamily, "Then thou dost not believe in premonitions?"

"I believe in the foreboding of my deeds," answered Fulvia. "If I do wrong that means sorrow for the future. Other portents do not exist."

"Thou speakest like a Christian," rejoined

Jetta smiling. She sank into deep thoughts. Was she perhaps asking herself whether Rothari and Jetta would less grace the diadem of pearls than did Valentinian and Justina?

In the mean time Bissula had finished arranging the red bridal veil, and now the pale matron with tender hand began to take away from the sadly smiling bride each piece of her clothing as virgin, and as was required by custom, replaced it by some part of the drapery of a woman. The old Phorkyas received each piece of the virgin's garments, so as to pack them up together with the child's toys which she had set aside for this day, and dedicate them all to the *Lares* of the paternal home. It was a melancholy festivity thus entirely alone without the crowd of curious female friends, who usually attended this spectacle, each of them secretly thinking to herself when would she undergo the same sacred ceremony. "Wilt thou not also unfold the magic rolls?" asked the matron gently. Jetta shook her head. But the pale woman laid her thin white hand on Jetta's full shoulder. "Think, Jetta, of this fatal hour! The dread sisters hover round thee. They weave fresh threads in the web of thy life. If now through a fault of

ours the woof were black?" She dried her eyes and then added, "The black thread comes up again and again before me, till finally the brighter threads disappear, and that alone remains. . . . thou knowest my fate, let that warn thee." And overcome by her sorrows she sobbed aloud.

"Do not weep," cried Bissula angrily. "That even brings misfortune."

"Thou dost not believe in omens," said Jetta gently, taking Fulvia's hand. "For once I differ with thee. Even a black thread would be preferable to me than the uniform web which the Parcae spin for most women. The thousand nothings which make up a woman's life, would be unendurable to me. Dost thou think that I have given up my great plans? I do not take my warrior merely to become a quiet contented married woman. You will yet hear of Jetta."

"May the gods direct all for the best," said Fulvia kindly, wiping away her tears. "Perhaps thou knowest not yet this day, how happy those are for whom the goddesses weave a single thread, and how it gnaws in our own hearts when we destroy the works of their hands. The way between the two flames is a long one, the torch of



Hymen, which promises to light up for us the deepest secret of human happiness and the torch of the funeral pyre which puts an end to all our disappointments and sorrows. Mayest thou never at any time, as I do, long for the rest in the columbarium, the peace of the urn, on which is engraved the last word of consolation: she was."

"Leave off those burial sermons," broke in Bissula anew. "A funeral is more cheerful than this wedding."

"Forgive me," said Fulvia. "Bissula is right. There are people who no longer can rejoice—and should no longer rejoice," she added bitterly after a short pause. The old nurse now quickly gathered up the bundle of maiden's clothes and children's toys, and disappeared with them to the sanctuary of the household gods. Having near her the bridal garments, the tunica woven with vertical stitches, the woollen girdle, and the red bridal veil, Jetta lay down to rest. Her friends kissed her again. "To-morrow another will be kissing thee," said Bissula in her blunt way.

"Well, then thou needest be no longer anxious about thy Ausonius," retorted Jetta smiling. Thus saying the women went below.

Long did Jetta lie there in deep thoughts, which continually recurring between the bright past and the dark future drove away sleep. After a while she quietly rose and lit her lamp. She sat down with it to pore over the rolls which still lay spread out on the table. She calculated, wrote, and again calculated. The figures did not seem to agree and she began afresh. Midnight was nigh, as she extinguished her lamp and returned to her virgin couch. This time she fell in reality asleep. When the day dawned, she went forth in the early morning stillness into the garden, herself to pluck the flowers for her bridal wreath as required by custom. She found in the corner of the highest terrace the old nurse gazing fixedly with her one eye into the heavens, to see what would first arise and from which side. But nothing beneficial took place. Nothing was to be heard but the ceaseless screams of a young hawk on the woodland slope, which having strayed from its nest sought it once more. As Jetta had finished plucking her flowers and all remained quiet, at a signal from Phorkyas a slave crept up to the dove-cot and opened the slits. Thus the birds sacred to Aphrodite first hovered from the lucky

side around the bridal head. Jetta laughingly raised her finger: "Phorkyas, Phorkyas, such omens do not avail. Take heed, that the goddess does not revenge herself."

"Oh, there was a great sign in the heavens as the sun rose," whispered the old woman. "An eagle rose straight upwards and then winged his flight southwards towards Rome! Thy Lord will become Emperor, else the arrow in the wood had hit him."

"Nonsense, old Phorkyas, when it suits thee thou seest crows to be eagles. For twelve years have I lived on the Rhenus, and as yet never saw an eagle."

"Therefore all the more certainly did Jupiter send him, my daughter!"

"Silence," said Jetta severely. "This day is too serious for such joking." She then returned for the last time to the maiden's room to let herself be decked out by her two friends and the weeping maidens. She put on the woman's tunica and the woollen girdle with knots hard to unbind. Fulvia draped her upper garment in rich folds and placed round the wreath upon her head. Then the upper part was rolled up and lightly

placed round her head and over her shoulders was thrown the flaming red bridal veil.

In the mean time sounds proceeded from the Atrium. Arator's voice might be heard as he received his guests, together with the congratulations addressed to Rothari by his comrades. Bissula ran every time to the vestibule, listened and reported to Jetta, now convulsively laughing, what was going on below.

When Jetta finally issued from out of her door with bowed head but firm step, followed by her women, low spoken blessings and a half subdued shout of admiration greeted her entry. With the deportment of a queen she descended the steps. "Does she not look as if she stepped out of the marble frieze of the Parthenon, leading the procession of virgins?" Gratian asked his neighbour. "As the priestess of Pallas descending down the steps of the temple of Minerva." "Descending in truth," murmured one of the dandy cousins of the family.

With majestic self-composure Jetta entered the festively adorned room and calmly did her black eyes survey the assembled guests. Few women and maidens, though many friends of

Arator were present. Some whom Jetta would gladly have seen were absent, for all the Christians kept away from the heathen parts of the ceremonies. Jetta rewarded Ausonius for his courage in braving the church tenets with one of her kindly glances. She also held out her hand to Gratian, who had proudly stationed himself next to his happy friend. Rothari to Jetta's delight had attired himself in full Roman costume, and looked in his toga like a thorough warrior. His fair well combed beard covered his kindly lips and his blue eyes gleamed with joy and inward happiness. He could not help at times taking a step backwards to feast his eyes in secret delight on Jetta's proud beauty, whilst she proud of his love stood facing him, in joyful consciousness of her worth. She also looked radiantly upon him, and this look conveyed so much esteem for her hero, so much pride in her choice, that he had to restrain himself in order to remain quiet. Finally the marriage contract was completed, Jetta was led by her father up to Rothari and spoke in firm tones the binding formula. "Where thou art dominus, I shall be domina, where thou art paterfamilias, I shall be materfamilias." Then Fulvia as leader of the bride took

her arm, led her to Rothari's side and placed her hand in his. The entire company, headed by the young couple, proceeded to the Lararium, before which the bridal pair sat down hand in hand upon two stools which had been covered by a sheep's skin. Friends of both sexes stepped forward and placed small baskets containing fruits and white bread on the altar, offering incense whose blue smoke filled the house with its perfume. Arator himself then spoke the form of the prayers which called on all the gods of nuptials. First he mentioned Juno, the ruler of heaven. Tellus also, the earth and ground he named, on which the house was built. Picumnus and Pilumnus likewise, the gods of fertility. As he spoke the young couple arose and paced around the altar from the right, whilst Gratian smilingly bore before them a covered cista containing the symbols of home life. Arator finished and shouts of "feliciter" sounded in joyful tones around the hall. Flutes and fifes raised their happy strains from out of the viridarium. The married couple received the congratulations of their friends and the company broke up chatting about the rooms of the house, to unite once more at the banqueting hour in the Triclinium. Tables

were arranged in the form of a horseshoe, before each table two cushions, and on those in the middle reclined the young pair. The curtains of the dining-hall were drawn back, so that the guests looked across flower-beds to the pattering fountain and thence were able to have in view each apartment of the house. Soon a mingled perfume of wine and flowers, of scented robes and wreaths, filled the house and confused the senses. The voices of the guests waxed louder, the flutes sounded from the vestibulum. Couples who found the room inside too close paced up and down the halls of the peristyle. Young slaves in festive garments and wearing wreaths of ivy hurried in and out with silver dishes and red jars. Drinking was eagerly carried on, jokes a little less free than usual on such occasion flew backwards and forwards. The German warrior heard but little of all this. He was deeply rejoicing in his happiness and his eye hung on the cameo-profile of his wife, who with ready wit and a grace of address peculiar to herself ever gave answer even to what verged on the unseemly. As, however, the joys of the table heated the young heads, the company became more uproarious. Jetta's cousins, the plump Statius and the worn out

Nasica, whom up to the present Rothari had not deemed worthy of notice, had poured down more wine than they could carry and began at the neighbouring table to bombast and to defeat the barbarians with bragging words. Rothari listened for some time with great indifference, but when the remarks became more challenging he cast a raging glance towards the miserable ruffians. "Look away, barbarian," cried the drunken Statius. "We shall again, as did the divine Constantine, throw your kings into the amphitheatre to the bears and tigers."

"Down on their knees must they go, as did the nine Alemannian kings before Probus," lisped the weakly Nasica.

"Mind that thou thyself remainest straight," continued Rothari to the dandy, "if thou continuest drinking, thou wilt thyself soon kiss the ground."

Jetta laid her pretty hand warningly on Rothari's shoulder.

"As did thy cousins before Julian," cried back Statius, for the proud man objected to Jetta's marriage with a German. Rothari wished to spring up: "Let them be, my hero, to-morrow shall they apologise," whispered Jetta.



"I will not sit when near me wallow swine, and my spotless honour is spattered," said Rothari as he rose.

"What has the boar-pig grunted?" lisped the drunken Nasica.

"Let him be, he seeks a hiding-place," cried out the fat man. "Farewell, thou warrior in sheep's skin and clothed in armour of horsehair." With a spring Rothari was behind him, seized the black-guard by the tunica, raised him in his mighty arms and then plumped him down in the middle of the table. He then quietly turned towards the door, where Jetta had already taken refuge. With her did he proudly stride away, whilst within they continued their screaming and uproar.

"This is like the wedding of Pirithous," Rothari heard Ausonius say behind him, as he also hurried away from the scene of battle. "That comes from the attempt of the Lapithæ to ally themselves to the Centaurs." Again did the angry flush rise to Rothari's cheek. Thus even to this friendly good-natured Gaul did he seem to be a Centaur. In the mean time Arator had hurried up and with severe words had brought the young

men to their senses. As the heathen ceremonies were now over the other friends of the family had assembled in the garden and Jetta greeted them one after the other with proud indifference as if she had expected nothing else and had missed no one. But the ugly scene, though seen but by few, was nevertheless whispered from ear to ear and it was no longer possible to arouse once more the festive feeling. They were all glad, when finally the sun went down and it became possible to light the wedding torch. Out of Fulvia's arm, who acted as pronuba, did the young men headed by Gratian snatch the young bride with loud shouts. The procession formed up, to accompany the happy pair to its own home. Outside were gathered crowds of neighbours and more distant acquaintances, who now all joined. The flute players struck up the well known joyous melody and torch-bearers marched on either side. Jetta should have walked between Statius and Nasica, as the right of relationship assigned to the cousins this position. But the fat man had thought it well to disappear. Jetta shrugged her shoulders angrily and begged Gratian to take his place. Highly pleased did the young Augustus accept

the honour, although he himself did not feel quite steady on his legs. Rothari was glad to step out of the noisy house into the peaceful stillness of the night air. How this mild tepid summer night agreed with his own feeling of languid happiness. The distant roar of the river and the glittering stars on high seemed to express but in another language, that which also stirred his heart. How deeply did he feel at that moment as they left the house behind them with its torches, servants, and drunken guests, and the glory of a summer-night over the Rhenus unfolded itself before them, that only nature understood how to give festivals which glorify also the highest bliss and are never profaned by a dissonance. — Such a feeling was it, which Jetta's mild glance expressed. A lovely boy bore the torch in front of the bride, while two virgins followed with the garments and distaff. A bag containing nuts, confectionery and small gifts had been handed to the bridegroom, which he distributed right and left to the shouting boys. Thus did they wend their way down the hill slope, and joyous shouts, singing and cries of *talasse* echoed over the still plain. When the house of the young couple appeared on the hill, and the

torches reflected shimmering in the Nicer, Catullus' favourite epithalamium was sung:<sup>1</sup>

Urania's son, whose home is on  
The heights of skyey Helicon,  
Who the virgin in her bloom  
Bringest to her lusty groom,  
Hymen, hear, thou lovers' friend,  
Hear and hither blithely wend.

Flowers around these brows of thine  
Of sweet marjoram entwine,  
Bring the scarf with hue of flame,  
Type and veil of maiden shame,  
Come, and on thy snowy feet  
Let the saffron sandals meet.

And now, ye gates, your wings unfold.  
The virgin draweth nigh. Behold  
The torches, how upon the air  
They shake abroad their flaming hair  
Come, bride, come forth, no more delay.  
The day is hurrying fast away.

Dry up thy tears, for well I trow,  
No woman lovelier than thou,  
Aurunculeia, shall behold  
The day all panoplied in gold  
And rosy light uplift his head  
Above the shimmering Ocean's bed.

As in some rich man's garden plot  
With flowers of every hue inwrought

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<sup>1</sup> Sir T. Martin's translation.

Stands peerless forth with drooping brow  
The hyacinth, so standest thou.

Come forth, fair bride! delay no more,  
Come forth and hear the hymn we pour  
To Hymen, mighty God, for thee.  
Come forth, sweet bride, the torches, see!  
Are weaving high their golden hair,  
Then come in all thy beauty rare.

No base adultress from his vows  
Shall ever wean thy constant spouse,  
Nor any lure of pleasures vile  
His loyalty from thee beguile,  
But nestling to thy gentle breast  
He'll live in thee supremely blest.

As round its wedded elm the vine  
Doth all its clinging tendrils twine,  
So in thy loving arms will he  
Be twined and circled round by thee,  
But day is hurrying fast away,  
Come bride, come forth, no more delay.

Thus singing did the procession arrive at the lower gate of the villa, in which the young couple were now to live. Fulvia handed Jetta a cup with oil, with which she anointed the right lintels of the door. Another matron gave her a woollen band which she wound round the other post. The doors were opened and Gratian and Nasica tenderly raised the bride and carried her over the

threshold. The nearer friends followed even to the door of the house and then again carried the bride within. The first thing that Jetta saw was the young wolf, fastened with a new chain to the kennel of the housedog, which wagged its tail and endeavoured to spring towards Jetta. The new domina patted him gladsomely, while Rothari took the torch from Gratian's hand to stick it into the three-footed candelabrum which was placed at the entrance of the Atrium and had been symbolically adorned with myrtle and laurel. The red flame cast a mild light, to which after the glare of the torches outside the eye had to accustom itself before that one perceived the thalamos, which according to ancient usage had been spread near the wall on the left hand side. Before the door, however, through which Gratian had passed out, chanted the youth once more:

“Thy golden-sandalled feet do thou  
Lift lightly o’er the threshold now,  
Fair omen this and pass between  
The lintel post of polished sheen,  
Hail Hymen! Hymenæus hail!  
Hail Hymen, Hymenæus.

See where within thy lord is set  
On Syrian tintured coverlet,

His eyes upon the threshold bent  
And all his soul on thee intent.  
Hail Hymen! Hymenæus hail!  
Hail Hymen, Hymenæus."

## CHAPTER XVI.

FOR some time afterwards the lusty shouts of the bridal guests, their revelling and joking was to be heard outside, while the loving pair inside clung lovingly to one another. Rothari's disgust at having to receive the happiness of his life from hands so hated and at hearing the nuptial song chanted by lips which abused his people, began to diminish when enclosed in his wife's arm. At last outside all was quiet and through the open ceiling of the Atrium poured down the gentle coolness of the summer night into the room now cozily illumined by the high candelabrum. "Juno be thanked that they are away," said Rothari with a sigh of relief. "Come sit down near to me, my wife, and tell me, what most moved thy heart on this weary noisy day."

"Was there too much noise for thee, my friend," asked she gently, as she laid herself down

on the cushion by his side, and passed her hand through his curls. "Did those rude men spoil thy day?"

"Not they alone; but I am too happy to be angry. But all those others how could they speak so loud, nay more, shriek about our happiness. I hate this interference with what ought to be the most secret, and find the customs of my people much more chaste. No one dares speak of what rejoices us, not to say make riot before our very doors." Jetta looked at him curiously, almost with a slight tremor, as she undid her red bridal veil. His eye, however, lighted upon the curiously fastened knot of the entwined bridal girdle. "Can I now unloosen these gordian knots?" he said hesitatingly. She, however, pushed him gently back and imprinting a light kiss upon his forehead said, "Not yet, my soldier, thy probations are not yet finished." At the same time it seemed to Rothari that he felt a violent draught blowing on his neck. He heard a rustle. As he looked around, the curtain which led from the Atrium to the mysterious side-chamber which on his first visit had so disquieted him moved. Hastily did he roll back the curtain, Syagrius in white robes stood before



him, behind him Gratian and Statius, whom he had that day punished for insolence and who now looked impertinently at him. They all struggled against a malicious pleasure although they endeavoured to appear serious and solemn. Rothari turned pale with rage and clapped his hand to his side for his sword, but in his bridal costume was no place for a weapon. Syagrius now raised his right hand and said, "out of the tympanum hast thou eaten, out of the cymbal hast thou drunk, follow me!"

The Alemann gazed fixedly at him and passed his hand over his forehead as if trying to recall old forgotten words. He then glanced at Jetta. A look in her eyes showed him that she had agreed to this, and a feeling of deep bitterness shot through his heart. Again with a curious bend did Syagrius raise his hand, saying more impressively than before, "The god from the rocks has invited thee, Mithras has summoned thee, follow me!" Rothari now answered in a hoarse voice: "A raven am I, lion, I follow thee!" Mechanically his eyes once more turned towards Jetta. Sorrow, reproach, astonishment, contempt, all seemed to struggle at the same time within him and in his

eyes one clearly read the thought: "No Alemannian woman had done this. Shameless are they all, these daughters of Rome." But Syagrius had already opened the secret door. The light of a torch gleamed into the dusty room. One looked down into a steep passage hewn out of the rock. In the background stood two boys clad in white, with wreaths on their heads. They also admonished him in a loud voice: "Out of the tympanum hast thou eaten, out of the cymbal hast thou drunk, the invincible god has invited thee, follow us." On this Rothari turned quickly round and strode through the door down the humid dark steps. Syagrius accompanied him, at his side Gratian and the cousin followed. But as his companion preceded him by a few steps, the young Augustus turned back, closed the door and approached Jetta with unsteady gait.

"Thou hast drunk to deep of the Massicus," cried Jetta angrily, "what seekest thou here?"

"Most beauteous Velleda," hiccuped the youth, awkwardly clutching at her hand, "permit me to keep thee company till thy happy husband returns." Jetta looked coldly at him. "Leave me this sweet hand," said Gratian lispingly, "I am Rothari's best friend and must fill his place to-day."

"Certainly, Cæsar," said Jetta, "thou art more fit for that to-day than ever," as she cast a mocking look at the shaky spindle-shanks of the overgrown boy. "Thou art like enough to be mistaken for him, and thou shalt serve me in the way that I require from him. The first thing that I should have ordered thy best friend to do would have been to bring me a beaker of fresh cold water, for that in the jar is tepid through the midday sun. So march off to the spring." Gratian endeavoured to put on a sly look, but only got as far as a silly smile as he said: "So that thou mayest shoot the bolt behind me and thus lock me out?"

"I shall accompany thee," said Jetta imperiously. "Here is the jar."

"Beauteous goddess, I serve thee as a slave, then thou wilt reward me as a king." He took up the pitcher, whilst Jetta preceded him with her lamp. She accompanied him to the door of the vestibulum and there stopped to play with the wolf.

"Does he not bite?" asked Gratian, gazing at the animal with a glassy eye.

"Fear not, it is a sagacious beast and respects the legs of an Augustus." Gratian walked off

laughing towards the fountain, Jetta then loosened the wolf's chain so that it could command the whole width of the vestibulum. She then coolly returned to the Atrium, locking the door after her. When Gratian returned and was about to mount the steps, the wolf placed itself before him showing its sharp white teeth. "Quiet, little wolf," said Gratian, "quiet," but the animal sprang at him snapping at his legs. The Cæsar then sprinkled it with water, which made the young beast howl so furiously, that the dwelling of the slaves showed signs of being disturbed. Steps approached and when Gratian looked around he saw the wrinkled face of the old nurse whose eye seemed wickedly to ask what the youth might want. "Thy mistress requires water," said Gratian shortly, as he gave her the pitcher and quitted with Cæsarian stride the garden and villa. He stumbled over the steps, yet managed luckily to reach the camp. "Knowest thou, Davus, the best cure for amorous caprices?" he asked his slave in the prætorium as the latter was unloosening his sandals.

"No, my Lord."

"Let a wolf snap at thy naked legs. I have tried the cure. It is effective."

Jetta had returned to the seat where she had lingered with Rothari. The nurse who brought in the water found her in deep thought, so that Phorkyas did not dare address her. She laid some amulets and magic charms under the pillow of the thalamos. Jetta saw it not, but as the old woman approached, she impatiently waved her aside. What was it that could have embittered Rothari against her? she asked herself; for his look full of reproach, almost of contempt, had wounded her to her heart of hearts. Her own father had proposed to her that Rothari's probation should consist in his being compelled to quit the bridal chamber for the mithraic grotto. Such a sudden change, such a proof of obedience could then take the place of the severe discipline demanded by the god. That it was none less than the young Augustus who had sketched out this bold idea, that the cousins would then best be reconciled to Rothari through this slight revenge, had been Arator's argument, not her own. For other causes had she agreed to the venturesome proposition. She had shuddered at the probations to be undergone in the grotto, from which many a strong man had issued as cripple, for hours must they

remain lying in water, or be unexpectedly thrown down a ditch. To spare him this had she become an accomplice in her father's plan. The delicate Germanic horror at the profanation of the bed-chamber, which so pained Rothari, this Roman woman knew not, and the proud sense of honour which admits of anything rather than an encroachment into the mysteries of home, was incomprehensible to her. Nevertheless she sat in the solitary chamber anxious and sorrowful. How if it were all a trap to entice away her warrior and then murder him? The assassin who had shot the arrow in the wood might indeed be among the brethren in the grotto, and there complete what he had failed to do in the forest. For indeed, in spite of all that Gratian had urged, she still looked upon Syagrius as the ambushed bowman. All the horrible tales of people who had disappeared in the grotto of Mithras never to be seen again, came up before her with this thought, and herself initiated into the mysteries of the god of light, the dangers of this hour came prominently before her. She saw distinctly the fearful image of the god, the youth in Phrygian dress, boring his dagger into the neck of the bull. This time, however, it

was against Rothari that he drew his knife. A dog springs up at the victim, a snake licks the blood, a scorpion bites his legs—thus had she seen the stone beneath, “thus will they kill him,” she cried, burying her face in her hands. One more dismal idea than the other passed through her overstrained brain. She saw the raven of the mithraic grotto, the bird of prophesy and of the battle-field pecking out the eyes of her dead friend. The lion-heads of the pilasters turned to life and with their tongues lapped up Rothari’s blood. Eighty different tortures, had Arator told her at her own initiation, must the servant of Mithras undergo, before that he could attain to the degree of Father. What had he not at that time enumerated: Hunger and swimming in a wide circle, handling fire, lying for twenty days in snow, sudden surprises and frights of all descriptions, a two days’ flogging and remaining in the most painful of positions. She herself had seen the bed of martyrdom, on which they tried the courage and endurance of the disciples, before that the probationers could attain the higher degree. Then only was the importance of the new symbols explained to him, and at the end he washed his hands

in honey as sign of purification from all forgiven trespasses, or took an expiatory bath, so as to finally be accepted into the communion of the higher degree after the most intricate rites through bread and a cup of pure water. To shorten all these sufferings Jetta had agreed to the strange probation proposed by Gratian through sheer wantonness and now hour after hour passed away and Rothari returned not. She finally became convinced that she had been deceived. Her warrior had been secretly sacrificed, as they were too cowardly to fall upon him openly. The hymeneal torch was burnt down to a very stump. Jetta could no longer bear the unsteady flickering light. She lit a small lamp in the niche and blew out the torch. A horrible thought filled her, perhaps on the morrow with the remainder of this torch of Hymen she would perhaps set fire to the pyre on which Rothari lay. Darker and darker did her busy phantasy colour this most awful imagery. Then again she sprang up to shake off her gloomy thoughts. With shaking knees she crept to the door of the Horror of horrors. She laid her ear close to it and heard the dripping of the water and the sighing and howling of the wind. She shook the iron gate



which could only be opened from inside. At last she returned discouraged to her seat, where fatigue at last overcame her. Presently a rustling startled her from her sleep. Rothari had entered. "Mithras be praised," she stammered in half unconscious somnolence, "who restores thee to me whole." Weary and sad stood her husband before her gazing at her with a bitter look. As he remained silent she placed her two hands on his shoulders and said impressively in her deep rich voice which sounded like resonant brass, "Pardon me, I gave way to the calls of the mysteries." But the voice which usually moved him to his heart's core found him cold.

"The true mysteries of womanhood hast thou desecrated," was his cutting reply.

"Rothari," she cried passionately, throwing her arms round his neck. But he freed himself and said sternly, "Now it pleases me to continue these probations." He went into the adjoining chamber, stretched out a wolf's skin on the floor and laid himself down. Jetta enraged remained alone in the empty nuptial room. She was transfixed with horror and astonishment. No man on earth had ever treated her before as did this Ger-

man. Had her pride not revolted she would have returned that very hour to her father's house. In her anger she wished to go from hence. But where? To whom? She again suppressed her rage. She crept up to the entrance to his room and whispered in a voice choking with sobs, "Rothari, art thou still angry?" But she received no answer. He breathed calmly as if he slept. Weary she had finally to support herself on the richly adorned thalamos. Alone, sleepless, full of grief she lay down on the virgin couch till finally overcome by grief she fell asleep.

As the following morning Rothari awoke with buzzing head, all seemed to him as some horrible dream, that he had been mocked by boys in the grotto, he had a Roman wife, a Roman house, he himself had become a Roman. Empty and foolish now appeared to be the secrets and symbols to the man, which at one time in the grotto of the capitol had infatuated the youth. The oath of fellowship which he had sworn to brethren who had presumptuously invaded all that to him was most sacred, became now blasphemy. His own foreign being repulsed him as some mask. He had so long wished to be a Roman, now he saw through

the open door this variegated pavement, these sparkling walls, the delicate shades cast around the artistically rounded pillars, and all that pained him. It seemed to him indelicate that those masks on the mosaic pavement, those smiling shepherds on the walls should be spectators of the most sacred actions of his home life. A fierce yearning for the bare oaken walls of his German pile-hut seized him. "I will not remain here," he angrily cried out. "I will have no home with back-doors and secret passages. With a mighty swing he wrapped the wolf's skin round the Roman tunica which he had not taken off since the previous day. Thus did he issue forth in the Atrium. There he saw on the couch, on which he had sat the preceding evening with Jetta, his wife, his bride. Pale, silent and with folded hands did she sit there gazing sadly into space. "Jetta!" he cried out, moved to pity. She fixed on him her weary heavy eyes. "I shall build another house," he said, "of strong oak and roofed with warm straw. Wilt thou there be my wife?" She looked sadly into his eyes.

"On thy ground and property," continued he, "yonder on the Bühl shall we house, far from these bad, sensual men. Wilt thou follow me?"

"I have sworn it," she answered wearily, "where thou art lord, am I mistress," she could say no more. She burst into tears and buried her face in her hands. "My Jetta," he cried, "my darling wife!" Weeping she lay in his arms. He kissed the tears from her cheeks. His anger disappeared. And now in reality she became his wife.

## CHAPTER XVII.

IF Rothari began his married life by breaking a promise made to his beloved one, nevertheless he himself was thoroughly convinced, that only the unseemly conduct of the Roman cousins and Jetta's own silly conspiracy could be blamed therefore. But however much he laid upon Jetta, that which in reality went on within him was but a natural and unavoidable process, the reaction of his German blood against Roman customs. The life of the body had risen in arms against the caprices of the individuum, who wished to control the nature within him. Rothari had imagined himself to be a Roman, but at the first severe trial the German came uppermost. As instinct teaches every bird

to build its nest according to its own species, the vagrant swallow on the roof, the little hedge-sparrow bolsters his up in the grass, the jealous raven weaves his as wreath of thorns on the highest tops of trees, so did Rothari also follow the immoveable dictates of nature, which bid him house, as his father and mother had done before him in the Hercynian forest. He required oaken floors which would not split under his martial tread, broad benches let into the walls, where resting warriors could stretch at ease, dark walls which did not excite the senses with perplexing imagery. Thus he on the first morning of his marriage announced to his wife's father his intention of erecting a house on Jetta's property, so as to be nearer to the watch-tower on the other bank of the Nicer. Arator pointed out how great the danger were to which he exposed Jetta, but Rothari answered shortly that he would fortify the house and that besides this no Alemann would injure Rothari's spouse. Arator was silenced, but all the more shrieked cousins and friends.

"That is like his solitary wolf-nature," cried Gratian as he heard of Rothari's plan of building on the Bühl. "I ever thought that sooner or later

the barbarian in him would break through. Now must his pretty wife sit in a solitary block-house, guarded by a wolf." And he cast a stolen glance at his meagre shanks. "Permit it not," said the worn out Nasica, endeavouring to excite Arator. "The Bühl lies too far from the watch-tower to be protected by it, and is too distant from the bridge to allow of a rapid retreat. The barbarian is utterly sacrificing his own wife."

But Arator remained silent and shrugged his shoulders. He saw in Rothari's settling down in a barbarian's hut the beginning of the relapse against which he had warned Jetta. He would not interfere, more especially as Jetta was too proud to complain of her husband. But if in Arator's villa the relations were infuriated, in another place Rothari's determination caused great joy. The Alemannian slaves on the Bühl beamed with delight as they heard Rothari wished to house after the German manner. Their eagerness to dig, to undermine, to build, increased tenfold, because it was a straw-hut they were about to build. Pile after pile was sunk in perpendicularly, each single pile bound with wickerwork and moss stuffed in the crevices, and finally the inner wall lined with

smooth boards. The beams rose and were stratified almost of themselves and soon the green May tree adorned the gable. The broom and ferns to thatch the roof were brought in almost imperceptibly by day and by night. In an inconceivably short space the large stately wooden building stood ready surrounded by protecting trenches and huge piles, outside cleanly white-washed, inside well oiled and highly polished. A loud "Heilo, Sigo," received the beauteous woman, when she came for the first time to visit the house.

Amongst the oaks and beeches a mighty wooden building arose with windows much wider than high let in above. The roof projected forward so as to cover the staircase running along the wall, as well as the creepers which grew along the side of the house. Through the foremost door one entered into the wide hall, in which was placed a long table for the domestics, at the top of which arose the higher seats assigned to the heads of the house; for Rothari meant to sit enthroned here as veritable prince. In the background might be seen the hearth and the entrance to the chamber of the mistress of the house. In the back part of the house towards the green

mountain chain stretched out the halls, on whose beam pillars gleamed Rothari's barbaric weapons and Roman booty; for here he intended only to gather together in his carouses of mead drinking men of his race, who like himself served in the armies of the Augustus. All this appeared strange and wondrous to Jetta, but it displeased her not. She only felt herself disappointed. Had she not married Rothari, to make a Roman of him? Now rather was it she, who before she imagined it had become a barbarian woman. But it was strange, this power of command impressed her. A woman loves in her husband above all the man, and Rothari had taught her to know him. She even carried her head rather more bowed than formerly and her eyes had at times a timid inquisitive look, which previously had been utterly unknown to them. Thus on that day she caused the joyous builder to explain to her the intention of every contrivance and even accepted the strange and defective without contradiction. After that they had together inspected the house and had addressed the servants in a kindly manner, they were about returning to the Nicer, when at the well before the house a slight pale-looking young



Alemann arose who modestly stepped up to Rothari and Jetta.

"What, Lupicinus, dost thou already dare venture on such long walks with thy scarcely healed wound?" asked Jetta gently. "How art thou?"

"Thanks, noble lady," replied the Alemann. "I am cured, but for a soldier am I no longer suited, as I can no longer wear a helmet. My head aches, so soon as it is hot. I therefore wished to ask the Lord, whether he did not require a servant, who would keep his house in order for him and look after the slaves."

Jetta looked up imploringly at Rothari, who, however, hesitated. "I only saw thee once before," he then said, "as thou wert at blows with Salvius on account of thy faith. As far as I am concerned I leave to every man his gods, but insist on peace within my house."

Lupicinus blushed. "I will pray to my god as my mother taught me," said he modestly, "but be certain, Lord, that I begin no further quarrel. I know not how it happened, but the spirit of zeal which formerly rumbled about my head so strongly, disappeared through the crack Macrianus gave me." Rothari and Jetta laughed, Lupicinus,

however, looked straightforwardly at them, putting his hand to his ear in an embarrassed manner. "Believe me, my Lord, strange thoughts come to one, when it is a question of dying. I shall never forget how I felt, as I lay in the forest and the freshness of the morning woke me out of my death sleep. I plainly believed that I saw the grim king who lured me with his birdlike note and then cut me down still lurking behind the bushes. I again and again saw those terrible eyes and that upheaved axe. But, however much I shuddered, he came not. Then I began to grow stiff with cold. Only my brain remained clear, and my eyes saw plainly. As the sun arose the rain began to fall in the forest. The woodpecker pecked at the trunks, the plover screamed in the grass, timid partridges tripped through the wet brushwood. Then came something flying, black, with a long beak, and settled down on a branch opposite to me. It was a crow. It stared down into my eyes with fierce looks and beat its wings and cawed, krah, krah, and its beak became longer through greed, and again it cawed. Again a swoop and two other crows came who also shrieked and looked at me with their red eyes and stretched out their

beaks. And again they all three screamed out their krah, krah. And soon the whole sky was darkened by the brutes and they screamed and cawed and all waited for my death. Lower and lower did they fly from branch to branch, they were already on the ground and approached quite close to me and looked at me wickedly from one side with their evil eyes as if they were enraged, that I should so long withhold from them what rightly was their due. Suddenly the bushes rustled and I thought, now come the wolves, and so recommended my soul to the dear saints. The entire devilish black brood flew quickly off and disappeared with horrid screams of disappointment within the oaken forest. My comrades who had sought me now stood before me and picked me up and carried me further off. In the house of the heathen I was as tenderly nursed as if I were with my father and mother. I then found time to ponder over what had been the consequences of my quarrel with Statius. In reality we did not understand the merits of our dispute. It annoyed him that I wished things to be different. Through that had we come to the watch-tower, and into our misfortunes. When I was convalescent I made a vow

by God that I would drive away the spirit of contention from me and live according to the words of Scripture, which says, the true disciples are not those who say: Consubstantiate Lord, or consimilar Lord, or Lord, Lord, but practise love, which Samaritans and publicans have oftener than Levites and priests. But this does not matter here," he interrupted himself. "I only then thus thought as I lay sick."

"He was always a brave soldier," now said Jetta. "I pray thee, take him."

Rothari laughed and took the young invalid who had found so powerful an advocate into his service. Lupicinus received the appointment of porter in the new house. At first he was to have no other companion in the house with him except the wolf, he was to care for it and get it accustomed to him. So soon as all was ready, the mistress would follow. And so it happened. As early as the end of the month of August Jetta made her joyous entry, bringing her old nurse along with her. Rothari, it is true, frowned at this, but he did not like after all the sacrifices made by Jetta to separate her also from her old servant. Behind the mistress came all her properties as virgin,

contained in boxes and baskets. The reception room of the young married couple was filled with books and rolls, and curious did the Roman furniture appear among the oaken German benches. But Jetta and her soldier were happy. It was almost inconceivable to the former companions of Jetta's youth, how Arator's Minerva-looking daughter, who up till now had only busied herself with poets and philosophers, with political projects and magic studies, could be so devotedly attached to the boorish soldier, who rather crushed her gifts under than excited them, and who perhaps did not even understand the lofty soarings of her mind. But the heart seeks not in love what it itself possesses, but what it needs. Natures mentally excitable have hours at times in which they are utterly weary of themselves and their own beings, and therefore are they the least attracted by that which most resembles themselves. Thus was it with Jetta. Her restless excitable feeling, her head racked by thousand subtilities, joyfully reposed on the heart of that strong self-conscious man, who calmly followed a beaten track in life and in every step proved his capacity. Many a morning did husband and wife sit in the warm September sun

in front of the house, he cutting out an arrow, she pouring over her cabbalistic books whilst the wolf scratched the earth with its hind-paws. Yellow-beaked blackbirds hovered close to the ground through the bushes, and the young birds fluttered twittering from twig to twig. As if in a dream the soft hand of the beauteous woman then sought her husband's fair head. The kindly blue eyes of the German gazed in happiness into the unfathomable night of the black eyes of his Roman wife and a long warm kiss concluded this silent exchange of thoughts. Often did the pair wander through the still beech-wood, when the morning sun cast gleaming beams of light through the old white trunks, whilst in the moss the ferns waved like palms of victory in the morning breeze and the bell-flowers shook their little blue heads. How Rothari then rejoiced at the attention that this daughter of the city paid to the movements of the birds, or held her breath when in the distance a herd of deer tripped across the meadow. Jetta had always more deeply loved the fresh green mountains of the Wodan wood, from which a hundred purling brooks flow downwards into the Nicer than the dried up splendour of Italy, but

now Rothari taught her to better understand the northern nature. He showed her how Wodan as god of heaven in his blue mantle thrones over all. To him are wolf and raven sacred, the beasts of the battle field. He also related to her the mythus, why the god only had one eye, the sun, because he pawned the other to Mimrir, the giant of the water-course, so as to receive news of the lower world; it is only when his heavenly eye rests over water that the other pledged to the Inferior deity may be seen. Another time he pointed out to her in a sunny corner the mountain ash with its red berries, sacred to the god of lightening with the ruddy beard, Donar, to whom are also dedicated on account of their colour the squirrel and fox, and he spake to her of Ziu, the god of war, who has only one arm, like the sword only one blade. Jetta's lively phantasy pondered willingly for a while over the myths of the northern sky so rich with meaning. When the tempest raged over the beech-wood, she felt on her cheek the blow of the pinion of the giant-eagle, who stirs tempest at the end of the earth. It impressed her to hear that the world is a great tree at whose roots gnaw Loki's black and white mice,

night and day, till some day the ash must topple over. She believed that behind the blue mountains in the east lay Asaheim to which the rainbow leads up and where Iduna with her mead-horn will receive her heroes. In the woods she sought Baldur's blue flower and paid attention as to whether the hare crossed her path from the right or left. She was also willing to believe that the rocks about them were the limbs of original giants and that the thoughts of men date back to the mists of prehistoric times. With such talks did the husband and wife often sit near the pattering fountain in front of their house till the stars came out, and the white road became visible on which the gods drove their silver calves. Rothari and Jetta's favourite walk was to a solitary forest pond, which lay half an hour behind the Bühl. The lofty beeches and alders dipped their branches reverentially into the still green water, the sun flakes swam about the shaded spring like fairy eyes, it was the poetry of sylvan solitude, such as Jetta had never dreamt more beautiful. Here Jetta held up by Rothari's strong arm snatched at the pale water-rose and wove wreaths for himself and her, or plucked the small blue flowers which



abounded round the edges. "Oh, thou German wood!" she once joyfully cried. "I soon became weary of all, the blue waves near Baiæ, the pure line of the Albanian range, but not of thee, green forest, with the playing lights and whispering shadows." Then Rothari pressed her to his side and the beauteous woman saw in the pure spring the reflected image of her happiness.

There was only one in the blockhouse whom this idyl did in no way please and who looking on felt himself thoroughly neglected, whilst lord and mistress lived so entirely for themselves. This was the wolf. For the first time there were moments in Rothari's life which it could not understand. When husband and wife were on good terms, they did not spring about, as it seemed proper to do, holding each other's ears between their teeth, but they sat quiet in the thick blooming arbour behind the house and looked up to heaven or gazed into each other's eyes, pressed their lips together and made a small noise, which they repeated from time to time. All this seemed to the wolf so monotonous and dreary that it felt pity for them. "Perhaps," it thought, "are they both ill," and when that curious motion with the lips

was repeated it began to howl, for the affair was to him in no way safe. In time, however, it again found its right position. When Rothari visited the solitary towers on the foremounts of the Wodanwald, or carried on transactions across the boundaries with the Alemanni, then was the great hairy beast his only attendant and a doughty companion in battle, inspiring dread to each adversary by his lurid red eye. On the confines things remained remarkably quiet since the German had been placed as guard. Formerly when an Alemann showed himself near the watch-tower he was shot down, now the chiefs often came to visit Rothari. Wild bearded men, armed half as Romans half as Germans, they sat around Jetta's hearth and drank the mead and ate the deer which Rothari's servitors had made ready for them. Jetta shuddered at their barbaric names: Chnodomar, Rumorid, Richomer, Bauto, Fraomar, Bitherid, Hortari, Fullofaudes, and Balchobaudes, but she soon learnt enough of their language to exchange playful remarks with them, and although she complained that Rothari's language caused her neck to ache and brought on cramps in the jaws, it pleased her much that here a new field opened

itself to her quick, learning-eager mind. As she was once talking away to the whole crowd of chieftains in their own language, her husband jokingly remarked, that she was now nearly seeing her ambition fulfilled of having nine kings of the Alemanni at her feet. She knew not why this joke affected her like a bitter mockery. A husband who possesses, jests certainly quite differently from a lover who sues, but that was not all. She had at one time dreamt of another kind of submission on the part of the Alemanni, and was now aware that she ran a danger of losing herself. There came also an event in her life, which seriously reminded her of its early ideals. Thus it came to pass that she set aside all play at being germanised and became more and more susceptible at Rothari's jokes on the subject.

As he asked in astonishment why everything German had become obnoxious to her, she laid her hand on her heart and said with down-cast eyes: "I wish my son to be a Roman." Rothari, however, kissed her as he said: "And art thou so certain that it is a son?" When she as answer pointed to her magic rolls he knit his brows. A cruel word was already on his lips, but as the

delicate woman demanded forbearance, he withheld his censure.

In the days of the sweet joys of love Jetta had less and less busied herself with her cabbalistic books, especially as Rothari had earnestly begged her not to meddle with the black art. Her husband had ceased believing therein. To set Jetta to the proof he had soon after his marriage set her a problem which any of the conjuring women of his land would have easily solved. Jetta had not been able to do it. Since then he no longer considered her as a mistress in her art and thoroughly did he rejoice thereat. To convince her he occasionally asked her to question her rolls as to the favourable state of the weather, or the issue of the chase, and then triumphed when she was wrong. As for herself no want of success could shake her faith in her knowledge. Was she not thoroughly persuaded that so many secrets traverse one another behind the veil of visibility, that an unforeseen current could intersect her calculations. But above all the great point for her was rather a mystical penetrative satisfaction of her philosophical bent than practical results, which seemed to her to be rather a misuse of sacred

knowledge. Had not in her own life so much of the wonderful occurred, that she should doubt the higher powers. Had not Phorkyas, in defiance of her father's orders, shown her the lofty pinnacle of the castle in Argentoratum on which she once had trodden with secure foothold by moonlight? Had she not, when none on the Rhenus had the slightest idea of it, seen Julian, in spite of lands and seas, lying with the arrow in his back shot by some treacherous hand? The murderer she could not it is true recognise, but then he stood in a shadow. When therefore from time to time she returned to her studies, Rothari used to taunt her, that she often overlooked in studying the supernatural, things at home immediately to hand. He jestingly asserted that she knew the man in the moon better than the slaves which he had brought to her, and Phorkyas' magic potions were stronger than her soups. "Magic is very nice," he said mockingly, "but of what use is it at home? Prophecy to me whether your beast is a male or female wolf?" he jestingly once asked. Deceived by the name and amidst his shouts of laughter Jetta turned a she into a he-wolf. From that time on he would hear no more of her wisdom. But a coolness had

arisen between them on that point, although neither of them thought that this point could widen itself into a breach.

When the leaves of the forest began to colour red and yellow, Rothari shouldered his hunting-spear oftener and the wolf's education had so far succeeded that he was allowed to accompany his master on the hunt. He was no spoil-sport. Slyly did he track the sought-for spoil and guarded the slain. Whatever was given him to watch was sacred, woe to any who touched it. He never spoilt, as do dogs, by untimely yelps the chase for his master, but when he had driven out game, or put some foe to bay, his hollow bark announced in a characteristic manner the species of the adversary. At times they came back with hares and rabbits, which Rothari's steady aim had brought down in the sand of the plain between the groups of firs, or with a fat badger which he had dug out on the mountains on the opposite side of the Nicer; or they clambered higher so as to surprise a capercailzie <sup>1</sup> or wood-cock <sup>2</sup> for Jetta's kitchen. When the snow had spread its white

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<sup>1</sup> Tetrao urogallus.

<sup>2</sup> Tetrao tetrix.

sheet over the earth Rothari penetrated deeper into far away hunting-grounds, where he followed the slot of the broad-footed elk, the heavy-maned bisons or auerochsen, or the herds of buffaloes who wallowed in the forest marches. Rothari's men then prepared the hides of the booty into rugs and skins, and the halls of the warrior on the Bühl were filled with branching antlers on the walls, together with warm carpets and soft cushions. But whilst the German thus gave way to the love of his nation for the chase, Jetta felt herself alone in the solitary block-house. She had indeed a distraction in her books, wanting to the others, but her rich inward giftedness required to speak out. Her phantasy was ever busy, her heart had a great capacity for love, her mind was inexhaustible in plans and projects—but owing to these very causes she yearned to give them living scope, and when the German returned weary from the hunt, his silence was as oppressive to her, as her chattering was to him. Mentally gifted men are ever those whom an unsympathetic society bores, who feel the need of distraction, for whom a monotonous life does not suffice. Thus it happened that though Jetta loved her husband as much as ever, she was

nevertheless much less happy. This mental activity without purpose wearied him as useless noise, and she suffered through a power for which an object to work on was wanting. Pale and melancholy she sat in the dark lonely block-house, now covered with deep snow. Even physically she missed the pure air, together with the warm floors and baths of the Roman house, here the hearth with its smoke made her eyes water, and yet her feet were never warmed. She sickened, and the hope which she carried within her heart caused her as many dark cares as it filled Rothari with pride. Naturally since she felt herself about to be a mother the old superstitions returned in full force. What could she do those long winter evenings, but calculate the aspects for her child, and be heedful that all happened at the right hour? One thing she did when the moon was new, another when it was full, and nothing happened without due regard to conjunctures. If Rothari caught her at her calculations quarrels were sure to ensue. At first he spoke to her kindly, but at last he peremptorily forbade her continuing and seriously threatened her. Often before had quarrels arisen between them on this one evil subject, but now for the



first time they both held obstinately to their point. She opposed silence to the scoldings of her husband, but then the whole of that day she moved through the house with the proud grief of a Niobe, as if Apollo's darts had smitten her to the heart. Naturally enough the husband's anger was increased by such behaviour, and one night as he sprang up being again awoken by an inexplicable rustling and found not Jetta at his side he determined once and for all to break up her circle. With a light tread he descended the steps towards the brown wainscoted room in which the moon peered clear through the wide square windows, lighting up tables and benches with its silvery light. Angrily did he approach Jetta, but she seemed not to hear him. With closed eyes and hands stretched out towards the moon, she moved as if in a dream, now she had reached with one step the raised seat by the window, she swang herself up and disappeared. Rothari shuddered. Captive by some invisible power, the German stood there a while. Then he rushed out to seek her. He found no trace. The wolf in its kennel then whimpered, and following its gaze he saw Jetta walking on the ridge of the house, her face ever turned towards

the moon. In his horror he rushed back into the house to save her from a fall. But on entering the room he saw his wife silently and stilly, like the moon-light itself, letting herself down through the trap-door in the roof, she then hung on to the high window, reached the ground, returned to the couch and as Rothari bent over her, she lay in a deep sleep. Deep and quiet was her breathing, deception was not to be thought of. Troubled and filled with superstitious beliefs the German lay down on the couch and gazed at the sleeper, not knowing how he should explain this phenomenon, an illness of a higher civilisation. Had a *dæmon* taken possession of his wife as a punishment for her continual intercourse with the spiritual world? Was she under the sway of some higher divine power and had he reprehensibly mistaken and despised its chosen vessel? He knew not what to think of that which he had just seen with his own eyes. His belief in her power now returned again, but he shuddered at having a wife, who like the Walkures hovered about in the moon-light, and flying through the window as if they had borrowed Freya's feather-shirt, returned to him through the roof. He dared now no longer restrain

her. If he found her on his return home seated on the granite-block, which she had consecrated and wreathed as altar, staring into the flames so as to unriddle the future from the quivering figures, horror and pity forced back the word of blame. But darkly would he pass by her the following morning and appear not to notice her. At the most his anger was displayed against Phorkyas. Jetta's own disposition became ever sadder and more inanimate, and Rothari willingly avoided the rooms in which an ever lasting sighing was to be heard. It was repulsive to the strong man that she based on her condition the right of thus complaining, whilst the women of his people under such circumstances went on as usual with their work, were confined in the fields, and in a few days afterwards returned to their employments. What wot he of the feelings of the proud Roman as she crouched in the corners crushed in mind and body. It seemed to her as if the magic heaven of the ideal had melted away with her home, and she felt herself inwardly dead. At times she laid her hand under her heart and thought, it will be a son, who will carry out what I vainly attempted. I will bequeath to him the lofty plans which were not

for woman. Then she depicted to herself her future Tullius with a Roman nose, tightly compressed lips, and a piercing eagle-look which gazed out in the distance. She saw him plainly before her a statesman even from his cradle. Rothari weary of the sighing and groaning spent now most of his time in the camp, and hurried on at the approach of spring the building of the watch-tower and the fortifying of its hastily built walls. Alone with troubled thoughts Jetta hastened on to her hour of travail, and instead of the husband Phorkyas sat there murmuring mystic words, and told her of old events at which she fondly imagined she herself had been present, spun out plans for the future and was inexhaustible in her account of potent remedies by means of which Jetta should certainly surmount successfully the dreaded day.

On the ides of March the feeble cry of a new born babe resounded from out of Jetta's rooms into the hall beneath. Pale and exhausted the young wife lay there waiting for the day-light, in order to see the young Roman, born on the anniversary of the death of Julius Cæsar. When she awoke from her first sleep it was light, and she ordered the child to be brought to her. It

was fair and looked at her in astonishment out of its clear blue eyes. Horrified the young mother almost fell backwards among the cushions. "Phorkyas," she cried, "I have given birth to an Ale-mann." Silently did she weep, more out of excitement than from real grief. "Oh!" said the old woman, "keep calm, keep calm, my dove. The little head can we die black, and Phorkyas knows a means of turning the child's eyes black. . . ."

Jetta jumped up horrified. "I forbid thee to touch the child," she cried, and as if she would save it from the old woman, she laid it between her and the wall, and weepingly pressing it to her bosom, said threateningly, "Thou shalt be killed if thou touchest a hair of his head." Phorkyas answered not and Jetta fell again into a refreshing sleep. But she suddenly awoke, for she felt two hands laying hold of her child. Horrified she jumped up, whilst an old servant raised the child away from her, and another held a shield ready. "What will you, what will you do?" cried the terrified woman. "On the shield must it be brought to the Lord," answered the men. "Leave my child alone," cried the enraged mother. But now Rothari entered, took up lovingly the child in his

arms, and as he looked down smiling on the little being, Jetta's peace of mind returned to her and beseechingly did she stretch out her hot damp hand towards her lord and master.

Thus a common bond of happiness united once again those hearts which had become estranged. As the mild spring sun lay on Jettenbühl, warming the granite sand strewn cleanly around the block-house, the happy pair with their child in a basket near them, sat on the oaken trunk laid opposite to their house for a seat, whilst the wolf contentedly basked in the sun. The fountain near by poured out its pure silver jet into a wooden trough hollowed out to water the horses. Jetta laid her beauteous head on the shoulder of her huge husband and his blue eyes looked down lovingly upon her, whilst his strong arm encircled her slender waist. The sunshine lay clear on the yellow-flowered meadow, coloured butterflies hovered from flower to flower, Jetta's glance, however, followed dreamingly the course of the river, and hung on the blue peaks of Mons Vosegus, which stood out so clearly that day that Rothari's sharp eye could plainly recognise the villages and villas along its slopes.

"When I go," said Rothari, drawing Jetta

closer to him, "wilt thou return to the other side to be near to thy father, or hast thou become accustomed to the brown hut of the barbarian, so that thou art willing to remain alone here guarded by our faithful beast?" The wolf cast an intelligent look at his master's face and gave utterance to a clear joyous bark. "I remain, my friend," she replied fervently, "but I fear this war; could it not be avoided?"

"My Brisgovian and Lentian cousins will not permit the fort Robur which Valentinian has built on the great curve of the Rhenus, just as Macrian is enraged at our having fortified here. Luckily they are at enmity with one another, otherwise I should not leave thee here. There will be a hot fight, but I think I may return in August."

"Alas, if thou only mayest return, but all the signs point downwards."

"My beloved wife," said Rothari tenderly, "leave all that alone, and when I return see that I no longer find these accursed rolls here. Greet me with the news that thou hast burnt them."

Jetta shook her head.

"But thou must see that this knowledge does not make thee happier."

"We are not here to be happy," said she sadly, "but to study out the will of the Gods."

"Then occupy thyself with the Gods above, but not with those below." And he made a gesture as if to ward off any misfortune. As she remained silent he continued, "Then send away the old woman, it is Phorkyas who is ever reminding thee of this black art. She has the evil eye, I shudder before it. When I am least thinking of her, she suddenly starts up from some bush and hobbles round some corner, and then is that hour destroyed for me. In the house she creeps about like a broken down old hag, and yet I have seen her lift burdens, which astonished me, as to how her magic potions strengthened her. At times she appears to me weak-headed. Lately I heard the sound of arrows striking into the oak-wall, and thought that some man was practising shooting, when I leant out of the window I saw the old woman using a small delicate bow. I called to her to show me the arrows and bow, but she started as if she had been caught committing a murder. 'I only wished to see whether I should have made a good soldier,' she then squeaked out and began to laugh in a grating way. That



disgusted me and I turned away, afterwards I wondered where she obtained that bow and arrows."

Jetta listened with increasing astonishment to this story and lightly shook her pretty head. After a while, however, she said, "In many incantations the distances are measured off by bow shots; it is possible that she was practising those."

"Then send the old witch out of our house. Certainly she brings us no luck. I have already rescued her from the wolf, who would have torn her to pieces, for interfering with my weapons."

"She told me she only wished to charm them."

"I wish to have fair weapons and no magic darts," said Rothari angrily. "I hope that by my return death will have rid thee of her, or I myself will rid thee of her even against thy will."

But Jetta encircled the angry man in her white arms. "Is my warrior afraid of a little old woman?"

"Not for myself, but for thee."

"I am her only protection on earth, why should she injure me?"

Rothari's eloquence was in vain. When he came the next morning to bid his wife his last

farewell, Jetta sat in the arbour near the door, whilst the old nurse at his approach quickly disappeared round the corner.

The child hanging to Jetta's breast appeared to him weak and small, almost dying. Nursing was here imperatively necessary. He did not wish to hurt Jetta on this his hour of departure. He kissed both, sprang upon his horse and galloped across the meadow, while the old Phorkyas from a window in the roof sent curses and signs of evil portent after him. Rothari looked back once again with an expression of deep care at Jetta's slender form and at the infant. "Will he ever become a warrior, whom so delicate a mother has suckled?" he thought sorrowfully, as he spurred to his horse.

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